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AND

MAGAZINE OF RABBINICAL LITERATURE.

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MORRIS J. RAPHALL.

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HEBREW REVIEW

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VOL. II.

FOURTH DAY OF NISAN, 5595.
FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 1835.

No. 1.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבנ. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from Vol. i. page 410.)

AKABIAH, the son of Mehallael, said הִתְחַלֵּל, "Contemplate three things, and thou wilt eschew (avoid) sin:—Know whence thou comest, whither thou goest, and before whom thou art hereafter to render וְהִשְׁבִּין, a responsible account. Whence comest thou? מִמָּשָׁה סְרוּחָה. From a perishable (*fetid*) atom. Whither goest thou? To a place of sashe, worms, and maggots. Before whom art thou hereafter to render a responsible account? Before the Sovereign of the king of kings, the Holy One,—blessed be HE!" (III. 1.)

COMMENTARY. *Akabiah, the son of Mahallel, saith*—The same maxim which our teacher here inculcates, he has already once before expressed. In the first *mishna* (verse) of the second *perek*, (chapter,) Rabbi bids us contemplate three things, if we would avoid sin: He says, "1. Know what is above thee. 2. An eye seeth and an ear heareth. 3. And all thy deeds are registered in a book."* It is in connection with this older instruction, that his present maxims are enforced: But while the former spoke to the better qualities of the mind, and invited us to direct our contemplation to that sublime and perfect Being who is infinitely above us in every respect, and to His attributes of Omniscience and Omnipresence, the reflection of which ought to check us in any deviation from the path of rectitude; our teacher at present addresses himself to the baser qualities of our nature, our vanity and fear; and it is by mortifying the one, and exciting the other, that he endeavours to bring us to a true sense of what we are and what we owe to ourselves.

Contemplate three things.—The

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. I. page 358.

VOL. II.

הִתְחַלֵּל, is Chaldee, and corresponds with the Hebrew word, הִתְבונֵן, "to contemplate," or "inwardly to reflect and digest, until we attain a clear view and understanding of any given subject." Our teacher uses this word, in order the more strongly to impress on our minds the importance of the instruction he is about to communicate. From his nature, the ardour of his passions, and the violence of his desires, man is exposed to frequent and great temptations. The contagion of evil example, the force of association, and the prevalence of vice, which he every where beholds, add strength to his own propensities, and hurry him on in his career of sin and wrong. In the hey-day of youth, how is he to resist the impulse of his warm blood and impetuous sensuality? In the meridian of manhood, how is he to escape the snares of avarice and ambition which beset him at every step? And when old age approaches, how is he to avoid the remorse which preys upon his mind when he finds that his years have been wasted, and his pursuits illusive? that the hour of reckoning approaches, when, to balance a long arrear of folly and sin, he can mus-

ter nothing but unavailing regrets and late resolves? To desponding man, thus surrounded with danger and ill, our teacher proffers his aid: He bids him ask himself three short questions, the answers to which, with talismanic force, will blunt the keen edge of desire, and triumph over the assault of temptation. But, in order that they may exert their salutary influence, it is needful they should be deeply reflected on, that they should be themes of constant and profound contemplation, till the knowledge they impart becomes firmly engraved on his heart and mind: So that, whenever the loud summons of his passions from within, aided by the bland whisper of seduction from without, assail his better reason, these three questions are present to his mind, and afford him their effectual protection.

Know whence thou comest, &c.—Of all the evil qualities that can take root in the human heart, there is none so firmly seated, so widely spread, or so difficult to overcome, as vanity, or the improper estimation of our own worth. It consists of two distinct branches: Pride, which induces man to consider himself as superior to other men, upon whom he looks down with scorn; and ambition, which leads him to induce others to acknowledge and yield to his superiority. Sometimes one, sometimes the other, of these evil qualities is in possession of the human mind; but, generally, they are found together. The proud man is ambitious, the ambitious man is proud. The two combined form vanity or highmindedness; a fault of all others most reprehensible, as Holy Writ declares: "Every one that is highminded is an abomination to the Lord." (Prov. xvi. 5.) If we examine why this vice is so strongly reprov'd, we find the reason,—Because it is parent to every sin or evil deed that man commits: For as its modifications are so manifold, and the hold it has upon the human heart so very strong, there is scarcely any wrong committed by man but what may be traced to its fatal influence. Accordingly when Israel was exhorted to be obedient to the commands of the Lord, Holy Writ particularly

cautions them, "Lest thy heart become haughty, and thou forget the Lord thy God." (Deut. viii. 14.) The antidote to this subtle poison which gangrenes the moral frame, is humility, or the proper estimate of our own littleness. This likewise forms two branches: Lowliness of mind, which induces man to consider himself in his true light; and meekness, which induces him to carry that just estimation of himself into his intercourse with others: But these two qualities are almost always found united; so that the lowly-minded man is likewise meek, and the meek man is likewise lowly-minded. The two combined form humility, the merit of which is so pre-eminent, that Holy Writ does not praise our teacher Moses (peace be with him!) for any other virtue or perfection, save alone for his extreme humility: As it is said, "The man Moses was very humble above all men which were upon the face of the earth." (Numbers xii. 3.) The fate that awaits the high-minded and the humble is strongly contrasted in the Sacred Scriptures: "Before destruction, the heart of man is haughty; but honour is preceded by humility." (Prov. xviii. 12.) As the inevitable doom of the high-minded, who, in his pride, forgets the Lord his God, is destruction; so the reward which awaits the humble, —who, in the words of the Psalmist, exclaims, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory," (Psalm cxv. 1),—is, that he shall inherit honour and glory.

It is to combat and root out that most pernicious quality of the mind, Vanity, and in its stead to implant the first of all virtues, Humility, that our teacher calls our attention to the first of his maxims, "Know whence thou comest." When thy young heart beats quick at the thought of pleasure, when the honied accents of vanity or self-love whisper to thee that no barrier ought to restrain thy career, nor any impediment be insurmountable to the youthful, the bold, the witty, the handsome, then ask thyself the simple question: "Whence do I come?" And the answer will teach thee, that thou art but the offspring of an atom

impure like thyself; like thee, too, perishable, and thy humbled heart will desist from its vain purpose. If in riper years thy fertile brain hatches out new plans of grandeur; if learning, power, or wealth, raise thee above the common herd of men in thine own and in their estimation, if the fiend vanity is busy at thy heart, and its intoxicating fumes bewilder thy understanding till it seems to be reason itself, which calls to thee, "A man, like thee, so wise, so learned, so perfect, is destined to rule mankind. They are but fit to be the humble tools of thy superior understanding, the submissive slaves to thy will. What! though many must be crushed to make room for thy designs; though, to establish thy superiority, the prosperity of many must crumble into dust; these are thoughts not worthy of thy consideration: A man like thee must possess firmness sufficient to pursue his purpose uninfluenced by the obstacles which deter common minds." When aspiring thoughts like these crowd in upon thee, then ask thyself—"Whence do I come? What gives me the right to consider the welfare of others as secondary to mine own? In what am I better than they?" And the answer will teach thee, that thy origin is not more noble and pure than that of the meanest man; that he, like thee, owes life to what is טפה סרוחה the same base and fetid source. Reflect on this thy origin, and thy haughty notion must yield to the conviction of thy nothingness.

Whither thou goest, &c.—Nor is it thy origin alone which thou art bound to reflect upon, but think likewise on thy end. Vanity may be intrenched in thy heart; it may plead: "It is true, thy origin is the one common to all mankind, but beyond that origin, incidental and unavoidable because thou art a man, thou art in every other respect superior to those that surround thee. Thou art more wise, more wealthy, more powerful, more handsome, more agreeable than others. These advantages exalt thee above them: Think not back on whence thou comest, but confine thy thoughts to

the present, and what now thou art; therefore enjoy the good in thy power, and let no consideration thwart thy mind." This delusive reasoning our teacher bids us refute, by carrying our thoughts one step further in the inquiry—"Whither dost thou go?" The answer will teach thee, that not thy beginning only, but thy end likewise, is that common to all mankind; in nought art thou their superior. The grave, that place of ashes and of worms, yawns for thy reception, as it does for that of the meanest of thy fellow-men. Short is the span that divides thy beginning from thy end, transient are the advantages of which thou boastest; use, but do not abuse, them. For brief and confined as is thy career, know

Before whom art thou hereafter to render a responsible account, &c.—Think not that the grave closes on thy existence for ever; that it is an asylum in which thou canst hide and escape the awful responsibility thou hast contracted. Holy Writ tells thee, "The dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Eccles. xii. 7.) While the mould receives its kindred dust, and worms riot on thy senseless clay, thy spirit is called to an account, not before one whose knowledge is limited, whose judgment may be abused, whose understanding may be imposed upon, but before the Sovereign of the king of kings, the Holy One, (blessed be HE!) who is omnipresent and omniscient; and who, though most merciful, is likewise most just. As thou art a free agent thou art responsible; as thou hast used or abused the advantages thy beneficent Creator has vouchsafed to grant thee during thy earthly career, so wilt thou be held to answer. Remember these three things; thy origin, thy end, and thy future responsibility. Remember that, while life is short, eternity is boundless, and that on thy proper use of the first depends thy existence throughout the second. Have these reflections at all times present to thy mind, and thou wilt avoid sin, as far as it is possible for frail mortals so to do.

R. Chaninah, the deputy-priest, said, "Pray for the prosperity of government; for if not prevented by fear of it, men would swallow each other alive." (II. 2.)

COMMENTARY. *Pray for the prosperity of government, &c.*—As a continuation of the maxims of Akabiah,—the instruction conveyed by which is plain, easy, and within the reach of the most ordinary capacity, so that whosoever reflects thereon can fully understand and avail himself of the wholesome lessons it affords,—our teacher places this short saying of R. Chaninah, in order by this arrangement to point out to us how great is the propensity for evil in the human heart: For, although man has it in his power, by duly exercising his reason, to reflect and avoid sin, he is constantly misled by his restless desires, and impelled by his evil passions, until he commits deeds more horrid than those of the ferocious beasts of prey. And instead of recollecting that he stands on the highest step of terrestrial creation, and that his actions ought therefore to correspond even with the dignity and essence of his soul, which is derived from the pure source of Divine emanation, man degrades himself by planning and executing deeds so disgraceful and reprehensible, that the very beasts of the field scorn to imitate him. Ferocious animals of the same species will not prey upon or despoil each other: Whereas man is worse than they; for, when under the domination of his furious desires, nothing is sacred to him; and, were the uncontrolled power in his hand, he would, to use the forcible expression of R. Chaninah, "Swallow his neighbour alive." Nor would he, midst the raging tempest of the passions, be restrained by reflection, or by the "still small voice" of the monitor within. But as Divine prescience knew that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," His wisdom caused government to be instituted by raising some men to be rulers and legislators over their fellows, and imprinting fear of their power, and dread of the instantaneous punishment it inflicts, even on the most wicked of men. Thus a barrier is raised to

check gross criminality, which extends its restraining effects even to those who defy the laws of their Creator. Whosoever properly reflects on the state of society, and the salutary influence of government, must admit that the first institution of laws, and of rulers to enforce them, is of Divine origin. The power of the Deity, not the will of man, formed the first social compact: For man in a state of nature is free, and owns no law save that of force, and submits to no restraint but that of greater strength. It is not likely that an unreflecting multitude should voluntarily forego the uncontrolled freedom of action, and, of their own accord, bend their necks beneath the yoke of one, or of many, invested with power to frame laws and to enforce them. It was by Divine influence that men were taught to acknowledge the advantage of a social above a savage state, and to submit to those institutions, without which society cannot subsist. Therefore, thou, O man! who fearest God, and abstainest from sin, out of obedience to the kingdom of heaven, before the tribunal of which thou art hereafter to render a responsible account; if here thou sufferest from the enactments of temporal government, do not call in question the wisdom of Divine Providence; do not repine or murmur at being obliged to bend beneath the yoke of penal decrees, which single out thee and thy people from amongst the nations in the midst of whom thou dwellest, but know that whatever thou sufferest is out-weighed by the protection afforded to thee; as but for the dread of human law and human punishment thou couldst not dwell in safety amidst evil-doers, who fear not the Lord. Therefore, thou art bound to pray for the prosperity of the government, that no rebellion may disturb its peace, and destroy the majesty of the law. As the prophet teaches thee: "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away

captive, and pray unto the Lord shall ye have peace." (Jer. xxix. 7.)
for it; for in the peace thereof (To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from Vol. i. page 414.)

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WE have already stated, that, although it is the fear of the Lord which stamps the observance of His commandments with its true merit, that fear ceases to be meritorious if not accompanied by inward joy and gladness. But as this union of fear and joy appears most difficult to the human mind, we will endeavour to offer a brief illustration, in order that the worshipper may be able to comprehend how the feeling of joy, the effect of which is to elevate the heart, can be combined with fear, the natural tendency of which is to depress the spirits. We, therefore, say, Common sense and daily experience prove to man that it is his duty to submit to labour and fatigue during a long period, in order that he may attain some pre-eminent quality or distinction. It is equally true that, while obliged to endure such toil and fatigue, his mind will often yield to vexation and despondency; but when he reflects within himself on the high attainment and distinction which he hopes will be the reward of his exertions, a fresh spirit of joyous confidence invigorates and encourages him, so that he considers his arduous task as nothing, compared to the great good he hopes to acquire. Such, precisely, is the case with the fear of the Lord: For when man reflects on the sublime degree of contemplation to which the fear of the Lord leads him on, namely, that he may perceive and comprehend the great excellency and perfection of his Creator; his soul, penetrated with awe, is so completely absorbed in holy veneration, as no longer to estimate the feelings of depression and pain which result from fear of punishment. The illustration which we have here offered, receives its fullest confirmation from the sage, King Solomon, who says, "If thou seekest her as silver, and

searchest for her as for hidden treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." (Prov. ii. 4.) His meaning is, that as he who digs silver out of the mine must bear the painful toil and fatiguing labour it requires; or as the man who has been informed where a rich treasure is hidden must employ every needful exertion, however painful or arduous, to attain the object of his search; while at the same time the sense of pain and exhaustion is absorbed by his rejoicing at the prospect of the rich reward that awaits his labours: Thus, likewise, the shrinking and depression of heart which are the usual and unavoidable attendants of fear, yield to the joyous veneration which the contemplation of the Supreme Being does not fail to inspire. Thus fear amalgamated with joy is the frame or state of mind which renders the observance of His commandments most acceptable to the Deity. And as it is not given to every man duly to unite these two affections of the mind, he who does attain to that perfect union is not only called ירא אלהים "God-fearing," but is likewise distinguished by the appellation, עיורב מאדה ביה "a worshipper out of love." Thus Abraham who, after gloriously surmounting his various trials, is, in Genesis xxii. 12, called "God-fearing," is subsequently designated as "Abraham, my beloved." (Isai. xli. 5.) Our Rabbies say, (Talmud, treatise *Sabbath*, folio 88,) "Those who obey the commands of the Deity out of love, who rejoice in the midst of their fear, are distinguished in Holy Writ, which declares that "those who love Him are as the sun when it goes forth in its might." (Judges v. 31.) He who loves the Lord is not discouraged or led astray by whatever worldly ills he may be fated to endure. Thus; when the

Holy One (blessed be He!) first revealed himself unto Abraham, He commanded him: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." (Gen. xii. 1.) The very first act of obedience he was called upon to perform involved the sacrifice of all those affections which are dearest to man,—his home, his kindred, and his native land. His subsequent course of obedience was embittered by poignant affliction: Twice his beloved wife was torn from his arms. Domestic strife disturbed the peace of his dwelling; he was commanded to turn one of his sons adrift on the wide world, and to immolate the other as a burnt offering. Yet his own inward feelings of confidence and joy were not perverted. Cheerfully and courageously he surmounted every new trial with undiminished faith; and therefore is he called the "friend," the "beloved," of the Deity.

From all that has been hitherto said, we see that the perfection of joyous veneration is called, "love of the Lord;" that, moreover, the fear of the Lord is very different from the fear of man: For he who stands in danger from the hatred or resentment of mortal power is afflicted, terror-stricken, and unsettled in his mind; his life becomes a burthen to him, and his days on earth are shortened. Whereas, he who truly fears the Lord will not only enjoy tranquillity and happiness of mind, but his life becomes a foretaste of heavenly bliss, and his days are lengthened on earth. Solomon declares, "The fear of the Lord prolongeth life, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened." (Prov. x. 27.) His meaning is, that whilst the tranquillity and inward peace of mind which result from true fear of the Lord, and the cheerful observance of his commandments, add stability to man's health, and duration to his life; dread of the consequences, which are the natural result of the foul schemes hatched and practised by the wicked, preys upon his mind, destroys his inward peace, undermines his health, and shortens his life. To teach us that the fear

of the Lord does not impede our temporal prosperity, David tells us, "Wealth and riches are in his house; his righteousness endureth for ever." (Psalm cxii. 5.) And Solomon saith, "The fear of the Lord tendeth to life. He that hath it shall be satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil." (Prov. xix. 23.) His intention is to contrast the result of the fear of the Lord with that of fear of mortal power. While the latter begets terrifying anxiety and tends to death, the former produces tranquillizing ease of mind, and tends to life: While fear of man disturbs our undertakings, compels us to desist before half our purpose is accomplished, and dooms us to unceasing discontent; the fear of the Lord enables us steadily to persevere in our undertakings, to accomplish our purpose, and, through His grace, to attain inward content and a satisfied mind. While the fear of man, the danger which we dread from malevolence and resentment, may become realised, and destruction fall on our devoted heads, the fear of the Lord affords us security and protection, and we are visited by no real evil.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE love of the Lord is the highest of all perfection that man is capable of attaining. It is not to be reached at once, but is gradually acquired, and attained only by those whose fear of the Lord is of the purest kind. We have instanced Abraham, who, though called his "beloved," did not gain that distinction till long after his readiness to sacrifice Isaac, when he was told, "Now I know that thou art God-fearing." (Genesis xxii. 12.) When we examine the nature of love, we find that it consists of three kinds:—1. The love of the good; 2. Of the useful; and, 3. Of the agreeable. The first is the love which man bears because the object beloved is good. This feeling is not mixed up with any selfish consideration of the useful or agreeable qualities possessed by, and to be enjoyed from, the object beloved, but is confined to the abstract and positive good alone. The second is the love man enter-

tains for a useful object, solely because it is useful to him. The third is the love man feels for an agreeable object; not because it is good or useful, but solely because it is agreeable to him. The love of the useful and agreeable is changeable and conditional; is subject to increase or decrease, according to the greater or less quantity of utility or pleasure yielded by the object beloved. It is possible that such love may altogether cease, as the objects beloved lose the quality which rendered them such. But love of the good cannot cease or change; for, man does not love the object beloved because it is good to him, but because it is good abstractedly. It is the knowledge that the object he loves is truly good, and not the admixture of any base or selfish consideration, that induces the lover to attach himself to the object beloved, which becomes imprinted on his inmost heart, so that the lover and the object beloved become united indissolubly in the bonds of love; for true love is the perfect mental union of the lover and the object beloved, until they become one in harmony of heart and soul. But in the love of the useful, or the agreeable, it is not the object beloved, but the quantum of utility or pleasure that it is capable of affording, which is present to the mind of the lover. Therefore, it is impossible that he, and the object beloved, should become indissolubly united; as his love is subject to change, to decrease, or even altogether to cease, as the utility or pleasure he enjoys is varied, diminishes, or becomes altogether exhausted. Thus, it is evident, that love of the abstract good is the most pure and sublime that the human heart can entertain; as it is not influenced by enjoyment to be derived, but only by the knowledge that it is good. As the Holy One (blessed be HE!) is the real good in whom there is no evil, because in Him there can be nothing composite or accidental, the love of Him is love of the abstract and positive good: And the more we know of His perfection, the more greatly does our love increase; because, as we have already stated, it is influenced solely

by the knowledge, that the object beloved is good. But as He (blessed be HE!) is likewise the Creator of all, who is gracious, and bestows its being on whatsoever exists, as He vouchsafes life to every animate being, and a soul to man, it ensues, that the Holy One (blessed be HE!) is pre-eminently useful, and, as such, most worthy of our love. When, moreover, we consider how amply He has provided for the beings to whom He has given life, not only with that which is necessary for their subsistence, but also with whatever tends to promote their enjoyment: (Thus, for instance, man is not restricted to bread alone for his food, though that would be sufficient to preserve life; but he finds grapes, figs, pomegranates, and other pleasant fruits, to increase the enjoyments of his palate:) We feel that the Deity likewise commands our love, as being the Author of whatever is agreeable and pleasant to man. And, although He (blessed be HE!) is an absolute Unity, it is evident that every species of love the human breast is able to entertain ought to centre in Him, who is not only good, abstractedly, positively, and in the fullest sense the word will admit, but who is also the Author and Creator of whatever is useful and agreeable to man. And as no being can be found more good, more useful, or more agreeable than He, it follows, that not only is every species of love due to Him, but each species to the greatest extent that man is capable of entertaining. Accordingly we find, that when Moses exhorted the Israelites to love the Lord with every species of love, as he tells them, (Deuteronomy vi. 6,) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," he prefaces his exhortation with the declaration, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God, the Lord is One." His meaning is, that although the Lord is One, in the most absolute sense of Unity, yet to Him are due all the various kinds of love—that of the good, of the useful, and of the agreeable; as He (blessed be HE!) is good, is the cause of whatever is useful, and the

origin of whatever is agreeable. Therefore, from whatever source thy love may spring, the Deity is entitled to it in the most eminent degree, as he combines within himself every motive that can induce the heart to love: Consequently, thou must love him "with all thine heart, and all thy soul, and all thy might," as there is no obstacle in the way of thy loving Him to the utmost degree of which thy nature is capable. It is not possible that man should love two objects with the same ardent and perfect love; because, if his affection is equally divided between the two, it cannot be perfect for either, nor can that complete union and harmony of heart and soul exist between the lover and the objects of his love, if they be more than one, which, as we have already stated, constitutes true love. But as Holy Writ teaches us, that the Lord is One, it is possible that our perfect and undivided love can centre in Him, who alone unites within himself the greatest claim to every possible kind of love.—And, though man undergoes great changes in his way of thinking, yet, in every period of life, his love remains unalterably due to his Creator.

If we examine a man's life, we find his years divided into three periods,—1. Ascending. 2. Stationary; 3. Descending; during each of which respectively, one of the three kinds of love we have enumerated predominates. During the ascending period, which reaches to man's thirtieth year, or thereabouts, the love of the agreeable absorbs every other affection. This species of love we find strong in the youthful of both sexes. And in the stationary period, or until man has reached his fiftieth year, the love of the useful rules the ascendant, and man is ready to throw away and spurn as a childish toy, and empty bauble, that which is merely agreeable, in order to promote that which he considers as useful to himself, or to others. But in the descending period, which commences after the fiftieth year, men discover, that both the agreeable and the useful are transitory, and afford no lasting

satisfaction to the mind; they, therefore, direct their love to that which is really and lastingly good: As we find, that the aged are generally more serious in devoting themselves to the service of the Lord, and in renouncing the gratification of their worldly passions and desires, and fixing their love on that true good which endureth for ever, and which promotes the salvation of their souls. For the youthful, owing to the greater heat of his blood, is less able to resist the impulse and desire of the moment; he, therefore, thinks not of the salvation of his soul. For, as he is entirely under the dominion of his senses, the power of which misleads him into the belief, that they will ever preserve their strength, he neither thinks on, nor concerns himself about, the immortality or salvation of his soul, objects which are altogether beyond the reach of the senses. And this difference of disposition in youth and old age is alluded to in Holy Writ, when, speaking of the righteous, it declares, "With long life I will satisfy him, and shew him my salvation." (Psalm xci. 16.) The meaning is, that, owing to man's reaching the last period of his years, and becoming old, his desires become feeble, and the power of his senses decreases; he, therefore, becomes capable of reflecting on the immortality of his soul, and on what is due to his salvation. He will discern, that this can be attained solely by fearing the Lord, and loving him, and joyfully obeying his commandments; to do which, as we have already stated, the aged are more inclined than others. This is the general rule amongst mankind; but it is not without many exceptions. We often see old men vain and sensual, like the young; ambitious, and greedy of gain, like the middle-aged; as, on the other hand, we often see the youthful possessed of that steady reflection which induces them to fix their love on the truly good, in a manner becoming the aged. These deviations are owing to constitution, temper, the force of instruction and example in their earlier years, and the influence of habit, and of society at a more

advanced season of life; but, however numerous the exceptions may be, the general rule which we have laid down remains applicable to the great mass of mankind. And as the periods of man's life, and the kinds of love of which he is capable, are thus found to correspond, it is evident, that, as different faculties of his soul are called forth and predominate, so does his love vary in its source and direction. For, in the years of his infancy and youth, his imagination is easily excited; every enjoyment is magnified and embellished to the highest degree; and desire acquires a force which, ordinarily, the youthful have not the firmness to resist, but must yield to. As his years of manhood advance, the active powers of combination and calculation are called forth, and man hurries on in the pursuit of wealth, power, and whatever else is apparently useful. But, as he descends in the vale of life, the film vanishes from before his mind's eye: He perceives that his best years have been wasted in pursuits that afford no lasting happiness: His reason becomes more bright, his understanding more clear, and he becomes convinced, that all earthly thoughts and things are vain and transitory; that the only thing which endures, and which can secure his own continued duration, is the service of the Most High, and pure obedience to His commands. And as it is the character of the understanding to condemn idle enjoyments, to subjugate desire, and to attach itself to that which bears affinity to its own purer essence; the aged man turns from the world and its vanities, to contemplations of a higher nature; he learns to fear and to love God, not only because He (blessed be HE!) is the Creator of whatever is useful and agreeable, but, chiefly, because He is GOOD. This faculty of the soul, which is generally called "understanding," is in the Hebrew language designated by the word, לבב, "inward heart." That member of the body in which the circulation of the blood, and animation are centred, is called, לב "heart;" but the word, לבב, is only used to express purity of un-

derstanding. Thus Job declares, "But I have clear understanding as well as you." (Job xii. 2.) The active powers of the mind are, in Hebrew, designated by the word, נפש, "soul," as Holy Writ expresses: "And ye shall afflict, את-נפשותיכם, your souls," or the active powers of your mind. (Leviticus xvi. 29.) The ever restless force of desire and imagination Holy Writ designates by the word, מאדך, "thy might: " And, to point out to us the love which is due to the Supreme Benefactor in each of the three stages of life, according to that faculty of the soul which then predominates, and the species of love which it engenders, Moses tells us, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all לבבך 'thine inward heart,' with all נפשך 'thy soul,' and with all מאדך 'thy might.'" (Deuteronomy vi. 5.) By the first, לבבך, he means that purity of understanding—the fruit of age and contemplation, which leads us to love the Deity as the true and abstract good. By the second, נפשך, he means the active powers of the mind which direct us during manhood, and render it our duty to love the Lord, as the Creator of whatever is useful. By the third, מאדך, he means the force of imagination and desire, which predominates during our youthful days, and makes it incumbent upon us to love the Lord as the Author of whatever is agreeable: As thus to love God is our most sacred duty, at every stage of life, Holy Writ continues to teach us, that this love ought to be evinced at all times in the service of the Lord, and in obedience to his commandments, in thought, word, and deed. Accordingly, we are told, (Deuteronomy vi. 6—10,) "And these words which I command thee this day shall be, על-לבבך, 'in thine inmost heart,'" denoting the service in thought. "And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them," (to denote the service in words,) "when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up;" denoting that our service is

due at all times and in all places. And to denote the service in deed which is of two kinds, Holy Writ continues, "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates." By the first, binding them "for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes," is meant the kind of deeds which man performs through the instrumentality of hand and eye, but which ceases with his

own life. By the second, writing them "upon the posts of thy house," &c., is meant that species of deeds which survive man, and extend their salutary influence to succeeding generations. Thus, then, we have demonstrated, that our love is due to the Beneficent Giver of all good, at every period of life, whatever faculty of the soul, and kind of love predominate; that this our love must be evinced by obedience to His commands, and devotion to His service in thought, word, and deed, at all times, and in all places.

(To be continued.)

III. COMMENTARIES ON HOLY WRIT.

THE BLESSING OF ISAAC TO ESAU AND TO JACOB.

AND it came to pass that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son! and he said unto him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, and I know not the day of my death: Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take for me some venison; and make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die. And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it. And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the Lord before my death. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats, and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth: and thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death. And Jacob said unto Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: Only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: And his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son: And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck: and she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. And he came unto his father. (Genesis xxvii. 1—18.)

THE event which Holy Writ here narrates has often called forth loud reprobation, as an iniquitous conspiracy between the mother and her younger son, cruelly to deceive the blind old father, and basely to defraud her elder son of his intended blessing. Our great commentators have explained this transaction in various ways, but none of them have succeeded in fully justifying

Rebekah and her younger son. The reason is, perhaps, that they failed alike in penetrating the purpose of Isaac, and the intention of Rebekah. It appears, however, that if we duly reflect on the narrative before us, all reproaches that may be addressed to our pious ancestress will appear unfounded and groundless.

Know, that it never entered into the mind of the righteous patriarch

Isaac, that his son Esau was to inherit the blessing of Abraham; that is to say, the eternal benediction which the Deity conferred on Abraham, and which comprised the assurance of being beloved by the Deity; that the Lord would be unto him a God; that he should increase, multiply, and become a mighty nation; and that he should inherit and possess the promised land. This blessing Isaac never intended to transmit to Esau. Full well he knew that the Lord had not chosen his elder son, who was rude and savage in his disposition, violent and overbearing in his temper, inured to bloodshed by his constant war with the beasts of the forest; who had forsaken the example of Abraham, and adopted that of Nimrod. These his evil qualities were not unknown to his father; but, amidst them all he possessed one virtue—obedience and love to his father, in so eminent a degree, that it secured to him his father's affection. Still Isaac was well aware that Esau was not the chosen of God; but felt convinced the blessing of Abraham was, by the Deity, intended to be the inheritance of Jacob, who persevered in the meek and pious habits of his fathers, was a perfect man, and dwelt within the paternal tents. Isaac, therefore, determined to imitate the conduct of his father Abraham, who, when growing old, bestowed his largess on the sons of his concubines, but did not bless his son Isaac before his death; as he was well assured, that the Eternal benediction of the Deity was intended for Isaac, as indeed had been revealed unto him: "For in Isaac shall thy seed be called." (Gen. xxi. 12.) He therefore did not deem it needful to bless Isaac, to whom the Divine benediction had been promised, and was actually granted, as we read: "And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed Isaac." (Genesis xxv. 11.) From the example of his own father Abraham, our father Isaac (peace be with him!) knew it was needless that he should bless his younger son, who, as he inherited the good qualities of Abraham, was also to be heir to the Divine benediction. But he felt it the more strongly

to be his duty to bestow his own blessing on his son Esau, to whom he would not be acting justly if he dismissed him with gifts only, as Abraham had done to the sons of his concubines: For Esau was, as well as Jacob, the son of his wedded wife Rebekah; he was, moreover, the first-born, and his father loved him. Amidst the many perfections of Jacob, parental love and obedience were not alone pre-eminent: Whereas the very faults of Esau's character served to render his love to his father more striking and praiseworthy. Isaac, therefore, determined to bless him: And in order to do so with a willing heart, he commanded him to go forth to the forest, bring some venison, and prepare for him "savory meats," that when thus in the full enjoyment of what had been procured by Esau's only virtue, (filial love,) his mind might forget the manifold failings of his son, and bless his virtue only. Therefore he said to him, "that נפשׁי my soul may bless thee." This is an expression which we do not find used on any other occasion in Holy Writ; and the reason why Isaac so qualified his blessing is: "Although my reason, my understanding, and those noble faculties, which constitute the נשמה, or intellectual soul,* may not concur in the blessing I am about to bestow on thee, because thy failings are many and thy virtues but one; yet the feeling of pleasure and enjoyment, procured by that one virtue, will excite sensation and nutrition, § those lower faculties which constitute the נפשׁ, or sensitive soul, and in its fervour it will bless thee."

Rebekah heard the command given by the patriarch, but she failed to discover his true intention, as our great commentators in after-ages have likewise done. She feared that the purpose of her husband was, to transmit the Divine benediction of Abraham to Esau exclusively; and as he the first-born would likewise, in right of his primogeniture, inherit the greatest portion of his father's property, her pious son Jacob would

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. I., page 110.

§ Vide idem, page 111.

be the sufferer through his virtues. For, as his kindness to all men rendered his love to his parents less apparent than the general unkindness of his temper did that of Esau, he would thus, by his father's partiality, be excluded from any portion in that blessing which at least ought to be shared between both her sons, as was subsequently done by Jacob, who transmitted the Divine benediction alike to his twelve sons. Thus she felt that a gross wrong and injury was about to be inflicted on her younger son, which she felt it her duty to prevent by any means. Therefore, so far from conspiring to defraud Esau out of the paternal benediction, her object was solely to prevent his usurping that which ought by right to belong to Jacob.

But the course of the narrative proves that she was mistaken, and that her suspicions of Isaac's intention were groundless; for the blessing conferred by him on the supposed Esau proves, that he did not think himself at liberty to alienate from Jacob any part of that Divine benediction which he knew was intended for his younger son by the Deity. Thus he does not, in his blessing, say, that (the supposed) Esau should be the blessed of the Lord, or that he should inherit the promised land: Nor did he extend the benediction to Esau and his seed after him; but the whole of his blessing is temporal and confined to Esau only. Nor is it the nature of his blessing alone which proves that Isaac never intended to transmit the Divine benediction of Abraham to his eldest son; but the events which occurred after he became aware of the deception practised by Jacob, afford a still stronger testimony to the original intention of Isaac. When Jacob, fearful of being detected by his father, said, "My father peradventure will touch me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing;" he anticipated a result naturally to be apprehended from his blind father, indignant at the fraud practised on his bodily infirmity, and the frustration of his good intentions towards his favourite son. But did the event justify his fear? No; on

the contrary, when Jacob was about to leave his paternal roof, and to depart for Haran, Isaac calls him, and blesses him a second time. And what is the second blessing he bestows upon him? What other than the Divine benediction of Abraham?—"And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham." (Genesis xxviii. 3—5.) This blessing, we find, is altogether different from that conferred on (the supposed) Esau. Whence comes this difference in the two blessings? Whence comes it that Isaac expressed no indignation at the conspiracy of Jacob? Because Isaac never intended the blessing which he conferred upon (the supposed) Esau to be the Divine benediction of Abraham reserved for Jacob; because he did justice to the motives, though mistaken, of Rebekah, who had not penetrated into his purpose, which was to prevent the envy and animosity which must have arisen between the two brothers, if the Divine benediction had been transmitted to the younger son; whilst the elder, born of the same mother, and whom the father loved, remained unblessed. Therefore, he bestowed his paternal benediction on Esau; but it was confined to temporal prosperity, and limited to Esau's person only, but not extended to his seed.

It is a subject of disputation between learned commentators, whether the blessings bestowed by the patriarchs, or other eminent characters of Holy Writ, are invocations of the Divine mercy, or predictions of future events. The most approved opinion, however, seems to be, that every blessing is an invocation of the Divine mercy. But, as the orisons of the patriarchs were acceptable to the Deity, and their requests granted, their benedictions united the two-fold character of prayer and prediction. Therefore, Isaac, when he discovers that another had carried away the benedic-

tion intended for Esau, says, "Yea, and he shall be blessed;" thereby expressing the certainty, that his blessing will be fulfilled; because he knew that his prayer was heard, and his benediction confirmed. When Isaac blessed (the supposed) Esau, he bestowed his benediction as a reward for the enjoyment which had been procured for him by the only merit that Esau possessed, his filial obedience. Therefore, the purpose of his prayer was, that the Deity would deign to bless,—not the wicked Esau, but—the dutiful son to whom he owed his present enjoyment. And when Isaac discovered that Jacob had forestalled his elder brother, in procuring their father the enjoyment which called forth his blessing, he thought that blessing must be confirmed to Jacob,—as the purpose of his benediction had been to invoke the Divine mercy

and grace for his son; not because he was Esau, but because he had been dutiful, and brought him the savoury meats which he enjoyed. Accordingly, the patriarch did not doubt but, that, as his blessing was intended for him whose service he enjoyed, it would be confirmed to Jacob; and, therefore, he so positively says, "Yea, and he shall be blessed." Nevertheless, it appears, that as his inward intention was to bless his elder son, the benediction he erroneously bestowed on Jacob was actually confirmed to Esau, who conquered the Mountain of Seir, and subdued the Horim during his life-time; and to him Jacob, his brother, bowed, and called him, "My Lord;" whereas, Jacob in his life-time made no conquests; no nations served him; nor did any one,—least of all, his brother,—bow to him.

(To be continued.)

IV. CUSTOMS AND OBSERVANCES OF THE JEWS.

פסח, PASSOVER.

We have, in a former article,* shown the extreme importance of this festival to Israelites, and to all the nations of the earth; not only in a religious and moral point of view, and on account of the great principles which it involves, but also because it affords the strongest testimony in support of the truth of scriptural history, and the most direct evidence of revealed religion that can be required or offered to establish the veracity of any historian, or the accuracy of any fact. It now becomes our duty to call the attention of our readers to the customs with which, from time immemorial, the Jewish nation has celebrated this feast, and to the influence which that observance did and does exercise on their nationality.

The *חג הפסח*, "paschal festival," also called, *חג המצות*, "feast of unleavened bread," instituted to commemorate the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from the

house of bondage in Mizraim, is the first commandment which the Lord vouchsafed to address to our nation through Moses his servant. Accordingly, the Rabbies declare, that the twelfth chapter of the book of Exodus, beginning with the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you," and in which the passover is instituted,—is the beginning of the law of Moses. The festival commences on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, Nisan, and ends, as at present observed, on the evening of the twenty-second day of the same month. In the chapter of Exodus which we have already quoted, its observance is enforced in the following words:—"This day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

* See Vol. i, page 414.

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put leaven out of your houses; for, whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your hosts out of the land of Mizraim; therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses; for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements shall you eat unleavened bread." (Exodus xii. 14—20.)

The extreme rigour with which the prohibition of leavened bread, during the festival, is enforced is subsequently and frequently repeated in Holy Writ. Thus we read: "Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee, within all thy confines." (Exodus xiii. 6, 7.) Again, "Thou shalt keep the feast of חג המצות feast of unleavened bread: Thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I have commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month of Abib." (Exodus xxiii. 15.) And again, "Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith.—And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coasts seven days." (Deuteronomy xvi. 3, 4.)

Thus throughout the whole of the law of Moses the prohibition of lea-

vened bread is strongly and repeatedly enforced: Indeed, there is no other observance, than that of the Sabbath, of which we are so frequently reminded; and, accordingly, the Divine prediction, that the Israelites should observe this festival throughout all their generations, in all their settlements for ever, is duly and truly fulfilled even unto this day.

While the Israelites dwelt in their own land, and the tabernacle, and, subsequently, the temple of the Lord, stood erect in its fulness of glory, the observance of the Passover imposed a threefold duty. The first was the sacrifice of the קרבן פסח "paschal lamb," and the observances it involved, as the law directs: "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house; and if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: Ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats. And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread: And with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain till the morning, and that which remaineth of it till the morning ye shall burn with fire." (Exod. xii. 3—10.) Various other sacrifices were likewise to be brought during the continuation of the festival agreeably to the commands of Holy Writ, in Leviticus xxiii. 8, and in Numbers xxviii. 19—24.

The second was the duty incumbent on all the males of the Jewish nation, to be present during the

feast at the place where the tabernacle of the Lord was erected, and subsequently when the temple was built, at Jerusalem. This duty we find enjoined by the law: "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God." (Exodus xxiii. 18.) And, "Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee: But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to rest his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the פסח passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the anniversary of thy coming forth from Egypt." (Deut. xvi. 5, 6.) The third was the abstaining from all kinds of leaven and leavened bread, the commands relating to which we have already quoted.

The influence which these observances must needs have exercised on the Israelites was of the most extensive and important nature. That nation was not formed, like all others, by the union of various families or tribes inhabiting a certain tract of land, and either by force of arms or free convention combined into a whole, forming a state or nation. The Israelites were all descended from one parent, Abraham, through one branch, Jacob. It was not the possession of a country, or a union formed by means of conquest or treaty, that cemented them into a nation. In Mizraim, before ever they were in possession of the promised land, or formed a body politic, they were a people distinct from the aborigines, not only while subjected to slavery by the cruel policy of the Pharaohs, but even before that policy was resorted to. And now seventeen centuries and more after they have been dispossessed of the land their fathers held, and have ceased to form a body politic, after they have been dispersed all over the earth, and have adopted the language and civilization of the countries in which they reside; still they have no where become amalgamated with the nations amongst whom they dwell, they still preserve and possess all the elements which constitute, or are required to reconstruct, their nationality; namely, community of language, of religion, of legisla-

tion, and of pure and unmixed descent. In this respect they are altogether unrivalled by any other people that ever figured in the annals of history. And if we come to examine the cause which enabled this one peculiar nation, the Israelites, which at no time was pre-eminent for greatness of power, extent of territory, or force of numbers, to preserve its laws, its institutions, and its nationality, while Phenicians and Assyrians, Medes and Persians, Greeks and Romans, the most numerous, most powerful, most wealthy, and most civilized of ancient nations, have, either as conquered, or as conquerors, entirely disappeared from the face of the earth; while, even in latter ages, no European laws or institutions of the present day are exactly the same as they were five hundred, or even three hundred years ago; if we come to examine into the cause of the miraculous and unexampled preservation, for nearly 3,500 years, of the Israelites and their laws, we shall find the Divine promise, "Even when they are in the land of their enemies I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly;" the gracious assurance, "I, the Lord, am not altered, and ye sons of Jacob are not destroyed:" In these few words we find the secret of their existence as a nation;—as in the Divine declaration, "My Spirit which is on thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart from thy mouth, nor the mouth of thy seed, nor the mouth of thy children's seed, saith the Lord, from now and for ever,"—we discover to what they owe the unaltered preservation of their laws. And, if our next inquiry be, Why they alone, of all the nations of the earth, have been thus guarded by the protecting mercy of Providence? the short, but important sentence, "I am the Lord and ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord," explains to us at once the beneficent intentions of the Deity towards them and towards all mankind.

But while we thus find, in the unerring and irrevocable decrees of the Lord, the cause and purpose

why the Israelites remain preserved and their laws unaltered, it becomes our next care to inquire, What were the means which the Deity, who acts not mediately but immediately, deigned to employ in their behalf? and which means, being so employed, are, we may be sure, not only the most adequate, the best-adapted to effect the purposes intended, but also the most salutary, the most conducive to the real prosperity of those in whose favour they were, and still are, employed. In reply to this inquiry, we unhesitatingly, and with small fear of contradiction, reply, The precepts taught, and the observances enjoined, by the law of Moses, are the providential means to which, at this day, we are indebted for our existence as a people; and for the preservation of the pure and sacred principles of faith entrusted to our guardianship.

Among those observances there are few, if any, equal in importance to the institution of the Passover. The Israelites had for centuries been enslaved and subjugated under the cruel yoke of the Pharaohs, kings of Mizraim. The free sons of Jacob had become bondmen; the descendants of the patriarch groaned beneath the lash of the servant of servants. Egyptian oppression degraded their bodies; Egyptian superstitions debased and brutalized their minds. Wedged in and surrounded by Mizraim's countless hosts, all deliverance seemed impossible: For who dared provoke, who could withstand, the mighty Pharaoh? But, at their utmost need, when every hope had fled, the Friend of Abraham remembered His covenant, and as speedily as effectually changed their condition. The daughter of their tyrant became the instrument of Providence to protect their destined liberator; and though a deed of youthful ardour forced him to fly from Egypt, it was not till after his capacious mind had grasped all that the then state of society afforded of learning and of knowledge. Forty years he sojourned in the lonely wilderness, pondering on the sufferings of his brethren, and on the Divine promises they had inherited from their fathers; but, when the

cup of their misery was full, and the hour of deliverance came, the man came with it. In the desert the voice of God, the God of his fathers, found him: It bade him to go and confront the tyrant on his throne, and claim liberty for Israel; and dauntless he set forth on his dangerous mission. Pharaoh scoffed the summons of the simple Israelite. Proudly he blasphemed, "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go!" But nature convulsed taught him to know the Lord; wondrous inflictions, plagues numerous and extraordinary, wrung from the humbled tyrant the confession, "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." And when his hardened heart had, again and again, retracted his submission, and rebelled against Omnipotence, the fated hour at length arrived, which saw Mizraim mourn in sackcloth and ashes for the untimely death of their offspring, "from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon," "while Israel went out with a high hand."

The impression produced by events like these, so contrary to the ordinary course of nature, and reasonable expectations of man, could not be otherwise than strong and lasting: And when Pharaoh,—with that wayward unsteadiness of purpose which marked his character and conduct throughout his eventful negotiation with Moses,—repented of his having dismissed the Israelites, and determined to compel them, by force of arms, to return to the miserable and abject state from which the Lord their God had liberated them, the world beheld a sight never before witnessed: "The children of Israel went into the midst of the (red) sea as upon dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." "And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them: There remained not so much as one of them."

(To be continued.)

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I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 5.)

R. CHANINA the son of Dosa saith, "In every man whose dread of sin קודמת precedes his wisdom, his wisdom will become permanent. But in every one whose wisdom precedes his dread of sin, his wisdom will not become permanent." (III. 2.)

COMMENTARY. *Every one whose dread of sin precedes his wisdom, &c.*—The word, קודמת, derived from קדם, usually denotes, "anterior to or before any certain event or thing." Were we to understand it in this sense here, it gives rise to the question: "If it is needful that man must dread sin ere he can become wise,—it is improper to say his wisdom will be permanent, as it does not yet exist, and is conditional. If the latter part of the sentence applies to that wisdom which he is hereafter to possess, why may not that accompany his dread of sin, and both possess his heart and mind at the same time?" In order that we may properly understand the maxim of our teacher, it becomes needful to examine what he means by the word, "wisdom;" and what he means by the expression "dread of sin."

By חכמה, "wisdom," is principally meant "the knowledge man attains from studying the laws of God, and His Holy Word;" and the influence which that knowledge ought to, and does, exercise to enlighten his mind, to purify his understanding, to set him free from the trammels of error, and to guide him safely through the labyrinth in which passion, desires, and example, combine to involve him. In this sense it is said of Solomon, ויחכם,

"And he was wiser than all men," (1 Kings iv. 31.) meaning, his heart and mind were most firmly imbued with the salutary influence derived from the knowledge of the Divine laws. There is, however, a second sense in which the word, חכמה, is likewise used, namely, to express "temporal wisdom, knowledge of the world and of man, and that ready skill and presence of mind which enables man to seize on passing events, and turn them to his own advantage." In this sense we find the friends of Haman called, חכמי, "his wise men," (Esther vi. 13.) meaning, that they were worldly wise, as their counsel to Haman proves them to have been.

The expression, יראת חטא, "dread of sin," denotes, in the first instance, the fear of offending the Supreme and Omnipotent Being, whose will has been revealed to man, in order that his commandments may be obeyed for man's own happiness. This feeling partakes, however, more of awe and veneration than of terror, and arises from a contemplation of the Divine perfections; which, as in the case of Joseph, meets the assaults of temptation with the reflection, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Genesis xxxix. 9.) There is, however, a second kind of

"dread of sin," which consists in the terror which he that is about to do wrong feels as the reflection rises within him, "What will be the consequence to me of the action I am about to perform? What will be its results in this world—what in the next?" In this sense Job exclaims, "If I be wicked, woe is me!" (Job x. 15.)—If I offend against the laws of the Deity, what can I expect but sorrow and pain?

It is to the mental influence which both these species of the "dread of sin" exercise on the truly wise, and on the worldly wise, respectively, that our teacher alludes in his present maxim. To the first he says, "However much thou mayest devote thyself to the study of the law, thou canst not all at once arrive at knowledge: Thy progress must be gradual; and in that progress thou wilt often be assailed by the voice of vanity, and the temptations of present good. The first will tell thee, that thy mind is already stored with knowledge beyond that of any other man; and, that, therefore, thou mayest relax in thine ardour. The second will point out to thee the great advantage to be derived from thy learning, the honours and emoluments which are thy due, and which are certain to reward thy merit. Both united will tell thee, that as thou hast already reached the pinnacle of human knowledge, it is time thou shouldst climb up to the pinnacle of wealth, honour, and worldly greatness. But," continues our teacher, "thou art to know, that the end and aim of all thy studies is, for thy soul to be penetrated with that feeling of awe and veneration with which the contemplation of the Divine perfections cannot fail to inspire thee; and, that, as thou progressest in comprehending His will, thou wilt, at every advance in knowledge, find new cause for venerating Him. (Blessed be He!) If, therefore, thou keepest present to thy mind the great object of all thy studies, and the fruit of thy knowledge, namely,—that thou mayest, in some degree, comprehend the Divine excellence in order to venerate Him, and dread offending his perfection,—thy wisdom will become permanent,

and become what we at first described it to be,—true wisdom. But, if at any time thou sufferest the idea of thine own wisdom and worth to take possession of thy mind, and givest it precedence in thine own estimation above the dread of sin, or veneration for thy Creator, thy wisdom will not become permanent, it will have lost that pure and sacred light which was at once its animating principle, and its beacon; it will sink into mere worldly wisdom, and become swayed by the counsels of vanity and the dictates of interest. Accordingly, Holy Writ tells us, "The fear of the Lord is wisdom." (Job xxviii. 28.) That fear of the Lord which is founded on a sense of His perfections, and the dread of sinning lest we offend His purity, constitutes true wisdom; and when that dread becomes subordinate in the mind of man to any other consideration, true wisdom has abandoned him, and its influence has not confirmed itself.

Having thus instructed those whose greater mental and moral perfection enables them to comprehend and apply his pure and noble maxim, our teacher next addresses the worldly wise,—the man whose character is undecided, who has not force of mind sufficient to elevate himself to the truly good, but who fears the consequences of abandoning himself to evil; whose wisdom, accordingly, consists in a weighing and balancing of gain and loss; who sets off the immediate advantage to be derived from transgressing the laws of God and man against the disgrace of detection, and the certainty of punishment; and who consoles himself for the present loss sustained through observing the law, by the reputation he may thereby gain, or the applause he may thereby acquire. To man thus wavering and undecided our teacher says, "Do not rely on thy skill in trimming and shifting, nor on the accuracy which frequent practice has given thee in the calculation of chances. Know that there is within thyself a propensity for evil, which, called forth and seconded by thy interest or self-love, is beyond the unaided control of thy boasted wisdom. If thou wishest to resist the prompt-

ings of vanity, the temptations of lust, the urgency of ambition, the gratification of revenge, or the cravings of avarice: If thou wishest to escape being hurried on to extremities by one or other of these powerful and formidable passions, it is not on thy wisdom alone thou canst rely; thou must summon to thine aid a more powerful auxiliary, if thou wishest thy resistance to be effectual. It is the dread of sin—of its fatal consequences to thyself, the punishment that is sure to overtake thee, if not here, hereafter, but probably both, that must be present to thy mind, and take precedence of the vain reliance on thy wisdom, thine experience, and thy knowledge of the world. If thou findest thyself addicted to any particular vicious indulgence, do not say within thyself, ‘Moderate enjoyment is harmless; and surely I have sense enough to know when I ought to stop;’ for gradually the pernicious indulgence will steal upon thee, until that which at first appeared to thee as moderation will become abstinence; and that which at one time thou fearedst to contemplate as the horrid extreme, will to thy perverted mind seem barely moderate. Better it is for thee at once to invoke the fear of sin, to say unto thyself, ‘It is true, moderate enjoyment is harmless; but am I certain that my enjoyment will always remain moderate? And if it degenerate into extremes, to what course of crime may it hurry me on? What will be the consequence to me here? what in another world?’ If thou doest this, thy wisdom will confirm itself. Though thou hast not purity or strength of mind sufficient to raise thyself to true wisdom, and its attendant, goodness, yet thy fear of

consequences will beget a habit of reflecting, and of naturally investigating, that will keep thee from committing sins and crimes which always are, likewise, great follies. But if thou, on the contrary, disregardest the dread of sin, and, wise in thine own conceit, postponest the consideration of consequences until a more convenient season, which never arrives till it is too late; even thy worldly wisdom will become entangled in the meshes of its own combinations: One error will lead thee on to another. The edifice which cunning has reared, guilt only can uphold; and, ere thou art aware of thy impending doom, the frail fabric of thy worldly wisdom falls and crushes thee beneath its ruins. Therefore, let the dread of sin, the fear of its consequences, be foremost in thy mind: As Holy Writ cautions thee: ‘Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the perfection of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.’ (Ecclesiastes xii. 13, 14.) Thy whole perfection—that which alone protects thee from degenerating into the folly of impiety and wickedness—is the fear of God, or dread of sin and terror at its consequences. Nor is that terror vain, as judgment awaits thy deeds: No secrecy can conceal them; no skill or prudence can guard them from detection. What is evil will be punished, what is good will be rewarded, by the Unerring Tribunal whose sentence awaits thee. Then remember, that without dread of sin all thy wisdom is vain; and, therefore, in every circumstance of life, ‘The fear of the Lord is the first of all knowledge.’”

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: “BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:” BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 10.)

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PERFECT love requires, that the lover should renounce his own indi-

vidual advantage and welfare, in order to promote the prosperity of the object beloved. Thus we find Jonathan ready to sacrifice his own

prospects of the throne, to his pure and perfect friendship for David: And though Saul pointed out to him the inevitable consequence of his steady affection for David, when he said, "For as long as the son of Jesse liveth on earth, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom;" (1 Sam. xx. 31;) Jonathan still persevered, and saved the life of his beloved David, with the firm purpose to sacrifice his own welfare to that of his friend. Such is likewise the love which the עוֹבֵר מֵאַהֲבָה "worshipper out of love" entertains towards God. He seeks not his own advantage, and is not deterred by his own sufferings; as his sole intention is to do the will of Him he loves. And this firmly rooted and immovable attachment, which stays not to calculate or to weigh loss or gain, but at once devotes itself, entirely and without reservation, to the object beloved, is alone worthy of the name of love. For that love which springs from the utility of the object beloved, and the advantage it yields, or the protection from danger it affords, is like the affection a man entertains for the horse he rides, or for the dog that guards his person or property; whereas true love has but one object in view, the happiness and satisfaction of the beloved object. And, accordingly, our Rabbies say, in the treatise *Aboth*, chapter 5, "The love which depends on an adventitious circumstance ceases with that circumstance;" whereas love founded on the intrinsic qualities of the object beloved, and free from every admixture of less noble feelings or considerations, is unalterable as long as those qualities continue. And such is the love due to the Holy One. (Blessed be HE!) Love like this can only be entertained by and towards intellectual beings; so that man loves his fellow-man from the sympathy of intellect existing between them; and if the object beloved should lose those qualities which excited our sympathy, or were to die, the love we entertain would cease, as the soul turns away from the corpse which no longer harbours that which we loved. This highest and most pure species of love which

can be entertained by intellectual beings only,—and which tends either to their high honour from their possessing, or to their demerit from their not being able to possess, this most noble of all human feelings—must be the offspring of their own uncontrolled will, and free from any and every species of constraint; for, whatever is in any degree forced on or from man cannot contribute to his real honour or dishonour. But that which is to raise or sink his moral character must emanate from his own free choice and volition. Our father Abraham derived the highest honour from entertaining this pure species of love, so as even to be called by Holy Writ, "Abraham my beloved," because his heart harboured no other intention than to obey the will of his Creator whom he loved, without being impelled by any outward motive or constraint whatsoever. For when he prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac, it was not constraint or compulsion which influenced him, as even the Divine command was not peremptory; for, as our Rabbies comment on the words, "Take now thy son," and, "The Lord will see," (Genesis xxii. 2, 14,) "Abraham pleaded before the Holy One, (blessed be HE!) 'Lord of the universe, Thou knowest, that when thou didst say to me, נֶאֱמַר, Take, I pray thee, thy son, thine only Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him there for a burnt-offering, I might have evaded obeying thy behest, by reminding thee, that, when I dismissed my son Ishmael, thou didst give me the assurance,—In Isaac shall thy seed be called. I did not, however, plead the former promise as an excuse for not obeying thy present command, but I subdued the yearnings of pity, and did not repine, nor question thy attributes.'" (*Bereshith Rabbah*, chapter 26.) Thus we see, that the Divine command itself was not compulsory on Abraham, as he could have avoided obeying by invoking the protection of a Divine promise, on the faith of which he had expelled one of his sons from the paternal home: But he did not do so, because he rendered his paternal feelings of pity for his son subordinate

to his feelings of love and obedience for his Creator. Therefore, the sacrifice of Isaac is recorded in honour of Abraham, as his meritorious deed; rather than that of Isaac, although he at the time was thirty-seven years of age; (according to the opinion of our Rabbies;) because Abraham was free to plead the Divine promise, as an excuse for not obeying; whereas Isaac was bound to obey when summoned. Therefore we, in our prayers, mention Abraham's having bound his son Isaac on the altar, rather than the devotedness of any other pious martyrs, who, in various ages, sacrificed themselves to sanctify the name of the Lord; because every one of them who submitted to martyrdom did so in obedience to the Divine command, "Ye shall not profane my holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel." (Levit. xxii. 32.) Whereas Abraham was not constrained to obey by any peremptory command of the Deity, nor yet by the impulse of the moment; for during three entire days he had time to deliberate, reflect, and to choose whether he would obey: As it is written, "Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off." (Genesis xxii. 4.) His obedience was thus the result of his unbiassed will; for that alone is the truly free act and deed of man, which is not done in a hurry, but is the result of mature reflection, and of the consciousness that the alternative is in his power, that no external influence impels or impedes his choice or controls his determination. Whereas he who does a thing without due reflection, has not preferred one of two alternatives, but has acted either from an accidental impulse, or from the force of habit and custom, or from his not being aware that he might do the reverse of what he has done: He is therefore not a really free agent, entitled to praise if he does well, or to blame if he does ill. Even the offering, which in itself is good, becomes worthless, if man (without reflecting on the distinction of good and evil) brings it from habit only. Holy Writ tells us, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to

hear than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they consider not that they do evil." (Eccles. v. 1.) The meaning is: When thou goest to perform thy orisons in the house of God, let it be from reflection and inward conviction, and not from the force of habit only: And be ready to hearken to the exhortation and admonition which is there bestowed on thee: For, paying due attention, thou wilt reflect on what thou hearest, thou wilt learn to distinguish between the good and the bad: Thou wilt prefer the one because it is good, and avoid the other because it is bad: And in so doing thou wilt be exercising thy own free agency, and be entitled to the merit of thy choice: While the fool who does not hearken to exhortation and admonition, who does not reflect or learn to distinguish between good and bad, so as to prefer the one and to avoid the other, has not, from his own unbiassed and well-considered choice, the merit of what he does: For though he even bring a sacrifice, (which in itself is a good deed,) he does it not from the inward conviction (founded on reflection) of its being good, but from the force of habit, or because he has been told to do so: Therefore he has no merit of his deed, for he does not properly exercise his own will; and the true merit of an action performed by a free agent is derived from his being acquainted with the alternative, and knowing that he has it in his power to do or not to do, to prefer the good or the evil at his own option. He chooses coolly and deliberately to do the good, because it is good. So likewise, he only is worthy of being called *עוֹבֵד מֵאֱהָבָה*, "a worshipper out of love," whose love is pure and perfect, without any admixture of constraint, fear of punishment, or hope of advantage: Such love is true bliss, worthy of eternal and everlasting reward.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BEFORE we close this division, it becomes our duty to examine if it is possible, that, as man loves the Deity, he may in return be beloved by the Lord. It may be urged, that though it is most just that man should love

God, because He (blessed be He!) is good, and also the Author and Creator of all that is useful and agreeable; yet there is no reason whatever why the Deity should love man, who is possessed of neither of these three qualities. It may further be urged, that man loves his fellows from some affinity of disposition and qualities which exists between them, or because they are useful or agreeable to each other, though the one may be so in a much superior degree to the other: But when their dispositions, qualities, pursuits, and tastes are altogether different, it is next to impossible that true love can subsist between them; for as sympathy links those in bonds of friendship who possess intellectual affinity, antipathy separates those who are intellectually opposed to each other. Thus we see that love can only be reciprocal amongst equals, or those whose disposition and qualities are similar. Accordingly men are desirous of being loved by the wise and the good, in order that it may appear there is a mental resemblance between them. Experience proves that the greater the equality is between two friends, the more perfect is the love that subsists between them: Whereas if one of them is greatly superior to the other, their love is no longer perfect, but of an inferior degree. Therefore, in some men, the fear of losing that equality which they consider as the soul of love or friendship, begets the wish that the objects of their love may not excel them in any way. Whereas others possessed of a purer feeling lose all thoughts of self, and become so fully identified with the being they love as to be but one with him in heart and soul; so that each considers the excellence of his friend as his own. Thus where there is any great or decided distinction or difference, reciprocal love becomes very unlikely: As we never see the truly good united in bonds of unity with the truly bad, or a disposition on either side to form such a friendship. The humbler classes of society do not aspire to the friendship of kings, as the distinction between them is so very great; for though simple citizens may love and

venerate their sovereign, they cannot expect that he should distinguish each individual of them with his love and friendship, however beneficent he may be to the whole class of which they are members: And the distance between the mightiest of monarchs and his meanest subjects is infinitely less than that between man and his Creator.

From all that has been hitherto stated, it may reasonably be urged, that though man does, and is bound to, love the Deity either as the Source of whatever is useful, or from the pleasure derived from contemplating, and in some degree conceiving, His infinite excellence, or out of love to the abstract good, it is impossible that the Deity can love man on account of his being either good, or useful, or agreeable. The question may therefore fairly be put, How are we to understand Holy Writ when it tells us: "Wherefore it shall come to pass, if you hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers; *and he will love thee*, and bless thee, and multiply thee:" (Deut. vii. 12, 13 :) Or when the prophet exclaims: "I have loved you, saith the Lord:" (Mal. i. 2 :) or when the Psalmist says: "The Lord loveth the righteous?" (Psalm cxlvi. 5 :) The answer is: Love originates from three different causes. The first is equality; that is to say, resemblance in disposition and qualities, or in the utility or pleasure which lovers reciprocally derive from each other. He who is most perfect, or confers the greater quantum of utility or pleasure, is entitled to be most beloved. But if there is perfect equality, the love is equal and perfect. The second is nature, which induces the parent to love his offspring, and the workman to love the production of his labour. The third is relative situation, which again is subdivided into three classes. The first is the relative situation of a king or ruler to his people or subjects. Here there can be no equality, for it is natural that, as we have already stated, every individual subject should love his or her sovereign,

while the king cannot individualize his love which ought to be alike extended to all. Moreover, there is no equality between the benefits conferred by the king and those reciprocated by his subjects: For the king protects the just, restrains the bad, ensures security of person and of property to all his subjects, promotes their welfare, and secures to them the blessings of peace and tranquillity as far as it possibly lies in his power; while the people honour the king, acknowledge his supremacy and dominion, and obey his laws, because they experience the advantage of so doing, and how greatly the subsistence of their social union depends on his person. Thence the relative connexion between the monarch and his subjects causes love to him, because he is the benefactor; and to them, because they honour and obey him. The second is the relative situation of a father to his child: In addition to the natural love a parent entertains towards his offspring, the relative situation between them engenders a feeling of love much like that which subsists between a king and his subjects: For the father performs his paternal duty, and endeavours, as much as lies within his power, to promote the welfare of his son, who, in return, honours him and obeys his will. The third is the relative situation of the husband to his wife; in addition to that instinct which induces affection for a person of a different sex, the relative situation between them engenders a feeling of love, founded on the reciprocity of benefits conferred, and also resembling that between monarch and subjects; for the husband provides for the wants of the wife, cherishes her, and strives to make her happy, as far as it lies in his power to do; while the wife waits on him, honours him, is careful of his property, and loves only him. In each of these classes we find, that the love of the inferior is greater than that of the superior; so that the equality of love between them is not positive, but relative.

If we apply what we have now stated in reply to the question, "How can love at all subsist between the Deity and any individual man?"

we find that it is utterly impossible that such love should be derived from equality or resemblance. It might, perhaps, be assumed that it is derived from nature, and that Moses alludes to this when he says, "Is he not thy father that has bought thee? Hath he not made thee and established thee?" (Dent. xxxii. 6.) thereby at once indicating the love of the parent for his offspring, and of the workman for the production of his labour. We likewise find a similar allusion made by the prophet, when he says, "But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our modeller;" (Isaiah lxiv. 8;) where also the love of the parent for his offspring, and of the workman for the production of his labour, are appealed to. But however fair this assumption may seem, yet when we maturely reflect we shall find that it is incorrect and ill-founded: For man is no part of the Divine essence, as the offspring is of that of its parent. And as the Holy One (blessed be He!) works by his word only, as it is said, "He spake, and it was: He commanded, and it stood firm;" (Psalm xxxiii. 9;) there is no resemblance between him and the workman who loves his production, because it has called forth his utmost labour and care; whereas, what is produced without labour is not particularly loved or valued. It therefore is evident, that whatever love may be entertained by the Deity for man cannot be derived from the second source. It must, therefore, be founded on the third cause,—relative situation. Accordingly we find the Sacred Scriptures designate the Lord as a King, a Father, and as a Husband. As a King: "God is the King of all the earth." (Psalm xlvii. 7.) "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer." (Isaiah xlv. 6.) "The Lord is our King, he will save us." (Isai. xxxiii. 22.) As a Father, in the passage in Deuteronomy (xxxii. 6) which we have already quoted; likewise, "For thou art our Father, for Abraham knoweth us not;" (Isaiah lxiii. 16;) and many others: For as the monarch confers benefits on his subjects, and the father on his son, in

return for which either desires but obedience and veneration, as we have already stated : So likewise the Deity confers His countless benefits on man ; in return for which He only demands obedience, and that his name may be honoured : As the prophet says, "Every one that is called by my name, for I have created him for my glory." (Isaiah xliii. 7.) We likewise find, that the Deity reproaches the Israelites for not yielding him that veneration and homage which is his due as their Father and Ruler : As the prophet says : "A son honoureth his father, a servant his master ; if then I be a father, where is mine honour ? and if I be a master, where is my fear ?" (Mal. i. 6.) And though the Holy One (blessed be HE !) does not stand in need of human homage, for he is the Omnipotent Sovereign who rules the universe in the fulness of his glory, (as we have already demonstrated in the fourteenth chapter of our second division,) he reproaches the Israelites with not entertaining for Him that awe and veneration which is indispensable to their own happiness. And therefore the prophet exhorts them : "Give glory unto the Lord your God." (Jer. xiii. 16.) For unless man venerate and give glory to his Creator, he cannot experience happiness or peace of mind. But it is not only as a King and a Father that the Sacred Scriptures designate the Lord ; they likewise call him a Husband : As it is said, "For thy Maker is thy Husband ;" (Isaiah liv. 5 ;) "And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi, my husband ;" and, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever ; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness." (Hosea ii. 16, 19, 20.) As the husband provides for all the wants of the wife, loves and cherishes her, and effectually promotes her happiness ; so does the Lord towards man ; and as in return the wife is bound to obey her husband, to serve, to love, and to honour him, so is man bound to serve, love, and honour the Deity.

Thus Holy Writ explains to us the possibility of a reciprocal love between the Deity and man, and tells us by what that love is caused. But the Holy One (blessed be HE !) has singled out the people of Israel from amongst the nations of the earth to be his peculiar and beloved people, without any other reason than because such was his good-will and pleasure : As Holy Writ declares : "The Lord השק set his love upon and chose you." (Deut. vii. 7.) The word השק is used to express a love without any particular reason to recommend the object beloved other than the will of the lover. In this sense we find it used by Hamor, who said, "The soul of my son Shechem השקה longeth for your daughter." (Gen. xxxiv. 8.) Although he can find many women more beautiful than your daughter, he prefers her to all others ; not because she actually deserves it, but because such is his will. This love, without any reason other than the will of the lover, bestows on the Israelites the designation עם סגולה, "peculiar people." As it is said, "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God : The Lord thy God has chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the people that are on the face of the earth." (Deut. vii. 6.) And Holy Writ takes care to inform us, that the preference bestowed on Israelites was not by any means the result of their merits, but solely the free-will of the Lord : As it is declared : "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people ; for ye were the fewest of all people." (Deut. vii. 7.) "Understand, therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it, for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiff-necked people." (Deut. ix. 5.) The assurance that his love for Israel emanates from his own free-will, was afforded when first the Deity deigned to make known to them his intention of becoming their Legislator : As he says, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine ; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom

of priests, and an holy nation." (Exodus xix. 5, 6.) As all the earth is mine, and I have the right to bestow my favour and free-grace in such manner as to me seems best, I choose you; and as I have the power, I have the will, to raise you above all other nations, to constitute you my peculiar treasure, and a kingdom of priests: However more numerous or powerful other nations may be, my promise will raise you above them all; for I alone am the Lord and Creator of the universe; there is no God beside me, no one to gainsay me, or to question me, Why doest thou so?

Thus the love which the Deity vouchsafed to grant to the Israelites was the offspring of his own free-will, and is of the kind which a king feels for his subjects, a father for his children, or a husband for his wife;

(To be continued.)

III. COMMENTARIES ON HOLY WRIT.

THE BLESSING OF ISAAC TO ESAU AND TO JACOB.

(Concluded from page 13.)

WE have next to notice the differences observable in the manner of addressing their father when the savoury meats were brought to him, by Jacob and by Esau, respectively.

The first difference.—When Jacob approached his father he only said, "My Father!" and waited until he was asked by Isaac, "Who art thou, my son?" whereas Esau, as soon as he came into his presence, did not wait for his father's addressing any questions to him, but told at once the purpose of his coming. The reason of this difference in their address was, that Jacob was fearful lest his father should recognise his voice. He, therefore, only said, "My father!" with the determination, that if Isaac did recognise him, and would answer his greeting with, "What is thy wish, Jacob, my son?" he would then speak to his father on indifferent subjects, but not name the purpose for which he actually came. But Esau, who had no fear of being detected as an impostor, had no cause to proceed with the same caution.

and as it is intellectual, it is lasting and unalterable, as Holy Writ declares: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jer. xxxi. 3.) The love which man bears towards the Deity, and which is derived from the third source, or relative situation, may be of every kind; that is to say, love of the good, of the useful, or of the agreeable. It is moreover the bounden duty of man, to love the Lord, and to obey his will in thought, word, and deed, at all times and in all places: This is the sole great aim and purpose why the Divine law was revealed to man. With this assertion we will close the third division of our work devoted to the illustrating of revelation. Blessed be God, who hitherto has aided us: He is exalted, extolled, and elevated above all human praise or benediction.

END OF DIVISION III.

The second difference.—Jacob said, "Arise, I pray thee," a tenderness of expression contrary to the rougher disposition of Esau, who only said, "Let my father arise."

The third difference.—Jacob, in addition to the words, "Arise, I pray thee," said, "Sit and eat of my venison:" Whereas Esau only says, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison." The word, אָרָץ, "arise," has a double meaning: The first is, "to stand upright," which is the reverse of sitting; and the second is, "to prepare for something that is to be done either sitting or standing." Jacob, with great tenderness of manner, invites his aged parent to partake of food he has prepared for him; and tells him to sit down at his ease, that he may eat of his venison. Esau, on the contrary, with that reckless rudeness which was peculiar to him, calls out to his father: "Let my father arise and eat;" here is the food thou badest me prepare; therefore eat of it and bless me.

The fourth difference.—Jacob said, "Eat of my venison:" While Esau

said, "Eat of the vension of thy son." Esau, in the pride of his heart, and as the eldest son of Isaac, considered himself as the true heir to the blessing of Abraham as the one in whom Isaac's seed should be called: Therefore, he says, "Thy son," as if he were the only-begotten son of Isaac. Jacob, who has no such feelings of pride, and is, moreover, conscious that his father has another and elder son, simply says, "Eat of my venison."

The fifth difference.—Jacob prefaces his invitation with the words, "I have done according as thou badest me:" Whereas Esau does not mention the paternal command. Jacob, doubtful lest his father should not believe him to be Esau, avails himself of the command Isaac had given to Esau, as a token in proof of his identity; as who but Esau could be acquainted with the instructions which had been communicated to him when no one else was present? as, though Rebekah had overheard the conversation, that was a circumstance of which Isaac was not aware.

The sixth difference.—Esau, in reply to his father's question, "Who art thou?" declares, "I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau;" while Jacob only says, "I am Esau, thy first-born." When Isaac first heard the voice of Jacob, he at once recognised it as belonging to one of his sons: He therefore asks, "Who art thou, my son?" in order to know whether it be Jacob or Esau; and Jacob had no occasion to announce, "I am thy son," as the father's question had already declared he knew him to be such. But, when Esau presented himself before him, Isaac was under the impression that Esau had already been with him and departed; and could not suppose it was his younger son, as the voice was clearly not Jacob's, although, in the agitation of the moment, he could not recognise whose it was. Fearful lest it might be a stranger who had introduced himself, he asks, "Who art thou?" And, as his question did not declare, that he knew the intruder to be his son, Esau was obliged to announce himself as such.

The seventh difference.—Jacob

says, "I am Esau, thy first-born;" while Esau says, "I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau." Jacob, when first in the presence of his father, and finding that, from the single word אָבִי, "my father," he knew his voice sufficiently well to be certain it belonged to one of his sons, was justly apprehensive, that if he suffered any doubt respecting his identity to remain on his father's mind, every succeeding word he might utter would tend to confirm that doubt, and lead to his exposure and detection. He, therefore, takes care at once to remove his father's doubts by boldly affirming, "I am Esau," in the expectation, that the name, coupled with the token he is about to give his father, will, in the old man's mind, produce the impression that it actually is Esau, who addresses him: Whereas Esau, who had no such motives, in the fulness of his self-love dwells on the claims he has to his father's blessing: "I am thy son;" moreover, I am thy first-born; and, lastly, I am Esau, whom thou lovest.

The eighth difference.—Jacob, in announcing who he is, says אָנֹכִי, "I (am);" whereas Esau says, אָנִי, "I (am)." * The first person is, in Hebrew, usually expressed by, אָנִי. When אָנֹכִי is used, it is either to negative all idea of another, as, אָנֹכִי, "I (am) the Lord thy God;" אָנֹכִי, "I (have) created the earth," and other similar expressions; or to convey a contrast: As, "Be ye silent, and אָנֹכִי I (will) speak;" "My brother Esau is a hairy man, and אָנֹכִי I (am) a plain man;" or, emphatically, to express greatness and consequence: As, "Fear not, for אָנֹכִי I (am) with thee;" "Behold, אָנֹכִי I make a covenant;" and, likewise, lowliness and humility: As, וְאָנֹכִי, "And I (am) dust and ashes;" "No prophet, אָנֹכִי, (am) I." The general sense which this word bears in Hebrew, and its distinction from, אָנִי, we find, likewise, in the French, *moi je*, and *je*. The sense in which Jacob uses it is the first, "to negative or exclude all

* This nice distinction is necessarily lost in the English version.

idea of another : " As if he had said, " I am no other person than Esau," —thus to add greater assurance to his words. Esau, on the contrary speaks in common terms of parlance, while he simply says, 'אֵשָׂא, " I am."

To complete our commentary on this remarkable occurrence, we must offer a few observations on the verses, " When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-Aram, to take him a wife from thence, and that, as he blessed him, he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan ; and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and was gone to Padan-Aram : And Esau, seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father ; Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife." (Genesis xxviii. 6—9.) If the intention of Holy Writ is merely to tell us, that from the circumstance of Jacob's going to Padan-Aram to take a wife, Esau knew that his own Canaanitish wives pleased not his parents, and, that, therefore, he married a daughter of Ishmael, why is the blessing bestowed on Jacob mentioned in connexion with this circumstance, and, that not once but twice ? The cause appears to us to be, that Esau prided himself in his own heart and said,

" I am the favourite son of my father, and deserve to be so ; for, though Jacob did steal my blessing, it was not intended for him ; and he has never had the paternal benediction bestowed on him by the free-will and intention of our father." But when he saw, that, notwithstanding the deceit practised by Jacob, their father did bless Jacob, Esau became disturbed in his mind, and asked himself the question, " If I were still the favourite son of my father, would he have blessed my brother after his unworthy fraud upon me ? " Upon reflection he found, that, coupled with Jacob's blessing was the command to proceed to Padan-Aram, there to take a wife ; which made him conclude, that the daughters of Canaan were displeasing to his father. But he also discovered, that Jacob was actually more worthy of blessing than himself, as he (Jacob) had abstained from marrying at home, but had at once departed to Padan-Aram, in order to obey the parental command ; whilst he (Esau) had for many years persisted in a union with wives who were " a grief of mind " to Isaac and Rebekah, and that thereby he had lost his father's love. In order, therefore, to place himself on an equality with Jacob, he went and married his cousin, of the house of Abraham, that the influence and affection of a virtuous and pious daughter-in-law might regain for him the love of his parents.

IV. CUSTOMS AND OBSERVANCES OF THE JEWS.

פֶּסַח, PASSOVER.

(Concluded from page 16.)

THE deliverance of the Israelites was complete. On the borders of the Red Sea Moses sang their first national hymn of triumph ; and at the foot of Mount Sinai the God of their fathers deigned to constitute them into a nation, by giving them laws, statutes, and commandments, and declaring himself their Ruler, the Chief of their community. In order to keep these laws present to their mind, and to preserve the memory of the miraculous events they had witnessed, various observances were enjoined, various festivals were institu-

ted ; and amongst them, one of the foremost was the פֶּסַח, or " pass-over," the celebration of which, in each revolving year, was attended with so many peculiarities that it was impossible the events it commemorated should ever be estranged from the minds of each succeeding generation, or obliterated from their recollection.

The first of these observances was the sacrifice of the paschal lamb. On the 14th day of each returning Nisan the whole nation of Israel prepared as erst they had done in Mizraim. The lamb was immola-

ted; the various ceremonies which had attended the first institution of the sacrifice were repeated; and, when the curiosity of the youthful was excited, the mighty deeds of the God of their fathers were related. As the narrator felt convinced that what he stated was true, he imparted his conviction to his hearers. His father, who had witnessed the same observances had listened to the same relation from his parent; in uninterrupted succession the facts had been handed down from those who had eaten the paschal lamb in Mizraim, whose ears had rung with the shrieks of their agonized oppressors, whose eyes had beheld with astonishment and awe, how, amidst the destruction of all Mizraim's first-born, their houses, distinguished by the blood of the sacrifice on the door-posts, had remained undisturbed, and the inmates uninjured. The lively sensation of gratitude and love which they had felt towards their Mighty Deliverer and Protector, they had transmitted as the most valuable heir-loom to their children. The repetition of the same ceremonies every year, as it recalled the occasion on which the festival had been instituted, renewed those feelings. The evidence of the senses, joined to the force of paternal instruction, perpetuated the conviction in every breast, that as the Deity, the Lord God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had vouchsafed, in a supernatural and unexampled manner, to liberate their ancestors from the yoke of bondage; He had likewise deigned to reveal himself to them, and to make known his will, obedience to which would secure their happiness here and hereafter. Thus, faith in the Divine origin and authority of their law stamped its impression on their souls; no room for doubt was left; for who could question the truth of facts attested by hundreds of thousands of eye-witnesses, who bequeathed their attestation to their descendants, in those very observances which they themselves had practised and strictly enjoined their children to perpetuate.

We have already said, the Israelitish nation was not formed like any other. It was a family rather than a

nation. The bond of union between them was the book which contained at once the revealed will of their God, and the history of their common ancestors. Their nationality consisted in their strict adherence to the laws which were registered in that book. Could any means have possibly been devised more likely to cement that union, to rivet and confirm that nationality, than the yearly repetition of an observance which at once silenced every objection, and removed every doubt that could be urged or entertained against the authenticity of the basis on which that nationality rested? Such was the purpose, such the beneficent tendency, of the paschal sacrifice. Its importance, as the great support of faith in the revealed will of God, is of itself so transcendent that we need not have recourse to mysteries, in order to seek and find the cause of its institution in the events of a remotely subsequent period.

To confirm and extend the impression which the paschal sacrifice must produce in the minds of the Israelites, it was enacted that they should not be at liberty to celebrate that offering or festival in the retirement or seclusion of their ordinary dwelling; but every male in the nation was bound to repair to the place which the Lord had chosen "to rest his name in," and there to bring his sacrifice. This assembling of the whole male population in one place, there to offer that commemorative sacrifice which bore testimony to the truth of their eventful history, was likewise calculated to exercise the greatest influence on their union and nationality. We need not observe that the nation were thus reminded of their family-bond, when every individual member assembled in the house of their Divine Protector and Legislator, who had chosen them from among all nations, "because he would keep the oath he had sworn to their fathers." Nor need we say, that opportunities were thereby afforded for forming personal acquaintance, intercourse, and friendship, between the different individuals residing in distant parts of the land, who perhaps might otherwise never have met, —but who, as these re-unions took

place three times every year, could scarcely fail to come in personal contact with each other; and that thus feelings of friendship and neighbourly love were excited, which rendered it easy for the different individuals composing the nation to consider each other as brethren, and to obey the great command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself." But, when the whole nation was thus assembled to celebrate the same rite, and thereby to avouch their faith in the Lord, and their belief that he had actually subverted the ordinary course of nature in order miraculously to liberate their fathers from thralldom, to reveal himself to them, and to impart to them those laws which are still obeyed;—when the whole nation was thus assembled, every individual of which it was composed must have felt his heart elated, and his mind expand, at the reflection that he was not solitary in his belief; that his father, his family, his tribe, was not the only one by whom the truth of the Divine interposition, and of the wonderful events which had occurred, had been attested, or the tradition thereof preserved; but that every one of the six hundred thousand who had been eye-witnesses to that interposition, and to those events, had transmitted the same account to, enjoined the same observances and impressed the same belief on, his children. Not one of them had doubted or called in question what he had seen; not one of them had entailed his doubts on his seed; the descendants of all and every one of those whom the Lord had brought out of Mizraim, "by signs and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm, and by great terrors," were now present to bring that sacrifice, and to perform those observances, which would bear witness that their fathers had been convinced of that which they had seen and heard, and that the sons firmly believed what their fathers had related to them. Thus the same spirit pervaded every breast. The feeling that they all were one in blood, in faith, and in fate, beat responsive in every heart. "Have we not all one father? has not one God created us?" was

the reflection that told home to every mind. Harmony, union, concord, and brotherly love, and, more than all, faith, firm conviction in the truth of God's holy law, and unqualified obedience to his sacred commands, were the result of each renewed assemblage of the people. And, accordingly, we find that, as long as the whole nation did repair to "the mountain of the Lord," their errors and backslidings, however frequent, were not lasting; that, though the seductive influence of the idolatrous worship practised by their neighbours might for a time bewilder their senses, they ere long returned to the law of their God, and the observances of their fathers. It was only when the cruel policy of a usurper,—who justly dreaded the influence which the well-remembered scenes and ceremonies of the holy temple would not fail to produce on the minds of those he had seduced from their allegiance to their king,—by force prevented ten out of the twelve tribes from repairing to Jerusalem, there to worship as their fathers had done before them, that the bond of national union was at length torn asunder; that rivalry and hatred succeeded to unity and to love; that the strength of the nation was consumed by unceasing civil wars, and the mercy of their God wearied by the most heinous crimes. And when at length the larger and more powerful of the two sections into which the nation had been split fell a prey to the crimes of its rulers, and the infatuated blindness of its people, the sovereign of the small and feeble kingdom which yet preserved its independence knew no means more efficient to revive and arouse again that spirit of Jewish nationality, which was centred in obedience to the law of God, and of Jewish courage, which put its trust in the Divine aid alone, than by returning to the faith and religious observances of his fathers, and particularly to the observance of the passover. Accordingly we read, "And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to keep the passover unto the Lord God

of Israel. So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah; and there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread, a very great congregation. So there was great joy in Jerusalem; for, since the time of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem." (2 Chron. xxx. 1, 6, 13, 26.) Nor was he mistaken: Adherence to the law, and obedience to the commands, of God once more raised that spirit and nationality which a long course of sin and disobedience had bent to the earth, and well nigh destroyed. When, shortly afterwards, Sennacherib, the mighty king of Assyria, invaded Judea, Hezekiah could address his people in the language of confidence: "Be strong and courageous; be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles; *and the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.*" (2 Chronicles xxxii. 7, 8.) Every reader of the Bible knows that the trust of Hezekiah, and the confidence of his subjects, were not disappointed; and that the proud blasphemer Sennacherib, after having seen his mighty host destroyed by the direct interposition of the Deity, was fain to give up his projects of conquest, and to retire to his own land, where, shortly afterwards, he met his doom. During the life-time of Hezekiah, peace, prosperity, and union accompanied the observances enjoined by the law of the Lord. That good king was, however, succeeded by a son, whose long and tyrannic reign rooted up every good seed that his father's wisdom had sown. While individuals in sorrow and obscurity cherished the law of God, and the memory of observances practised by their pious ancestors, the bulk of the nation, seduced by the evil example of their rulers, forsook the faith of their fathers, and embraced the puerile creeds of neighbouring idolaters. Their independence, their national

existence, their city and temple, were destroyed; and, though they were for a time restored, yet a second more lasting and more calamitous exile made it impossible for them to practise those observances, the due performance of which required that they should be in possession of their own land, or, at least free to resort to, and to worship at, the mountain of the Lord.

But the prescience of providence knew that such would be their fate, and therefore took care that one at least of the observances by which the paschal festival should be celebrated should be of such a nature that in every clime and region to which the erring steps of the Jew might carry him, he would still be able to obey the commandments of his law, and to perpetuate the evidence of his miraculous history. The paschal lamb could be sacrificed, the general assembly of the nation could take place, only at Jerusalem; but the unleavened bread could be, and was to be, eaten in all "their settlements." The word is remarkable; and if any thing were wanting to complete the proof that the observance of the passover is of Divine institution, that want is supplied by the fact that, at the very time they were liberated and formed into a nation, their Legislator knew of, and provided for, the remote futurity, when they were no longer to form a united body politic, but would be scattered in various settlements, or small disjointed colonies, over the face of the earth. And, in support of this our assertion, we must not lose sight of the fact that the fearful denunciation of כרת, "annihilation," or, as the English version renders it, "to be cut off from Israel," is limited to transgressing the Divine prohibition of eating leavened bread. It was foreseen and known, that a time would come when Israel would possess no temple where to offer their sacrifices, no city where their males could assemble: Therefore, the awful punishment of the transgressor was not affixed to either of these two observances. But obedience to the command which bade them abstain from leavened bread would at all times be in their power; and as,

from the suspension and temporary cessation of the other two, the third and only remaining observance acquired additional importance, its due performance is enforced under the threat of the most fearful penalty that man can incur.

This fearful penalty, and the importance of an observance which at present combines and concentrates within itself that influence which in better times it shared with the paschal sacrifice and general assemblage of the nation, has induced our pious Rabbies to give to the precautionary commandments of the law the utmost extension; and to enforce the observance of the passover festival with a strictness and rigour which at once guards the mind from disobeying the revealed will of God, and impresses it with a due sense of the solemnity of the festival, and of the importance of the observance. Let us not think that their zeal has been over scrupulous, or that the rigour of their precautionary precepts has been carried to extremes. But let us, on the contrary, for an instant reflect on the unfortunate and suffering position in which the Jewish people has for many centuries been placed, and we shall find that the upholding of these observances was a chief means which Providence employed to preserve their nationality entire, and their faith unaltered.

During upwards of seventeen centuries, the Jews, driven from their native land, have been dependent on the caprice of nations who had no feeling in common with them. Force and persuasion, encouragement and oppression, were alike resorted to, in order to compel them to forego obedience to the commands of their law. The edict of Hadrian which forbade the Jew from approaching within sight of Jerusalem, is well known. It was cruel, but not more so than the laws of Ricared in Spain, which forbade the Jews to celebrate the passover on the 14th of any month, or to observe any of their feasts or holy days at the stated time;” * a law which, at a subsequent period, was renewed and con-

firmed by the council of Toledo.|| The same spirit dictated the law of Justinian, which forbade the Jews to celebrate the passover *before* the Christians, § and the many enactments which, throughout the middle ages, interfered with the Jewish observance of the passover. They were all actuated by the same motive, which induced their framers to think that, if the Jews could once be brought to relax the strictness with which they adhered to this observance, it might become more easy gradually to wean them from the faith of their fathers, and to bring them to amalgamate with the people among whom they dwelt, until every trace and vestige of their nationality should be obliterated and lost. While thus the pressure of violence assailed them from without, the Rabbies, like the traveller in the fable, who, the stronger the wind blew, held more firmly by that cloak which afforded him warmth and comfort, were intent to implant and maintain in the minds of the Jews a true sense of the importance of that observance against which every hostile assault was directed. And they succeeded. Indeed they could not fail: The Divine prediction had pronounced it should be observed “throughout their generations, in all their settlements, for ever;” and, accordingly, to this day, wherever Jews are located, the sight of the מצה, “passover cake,” while it reminds them of their origin, their eventful history, and high ultimate destiny, is, at the same time, an imperishable record of their unaltered nationality, and the fullest evidence, to themselves and those among whom they dwell, that the same Omnipotent and Omniscient Being who, nearly three thousand five hundred years ago, instituted and predicted the unalterable duration of this observance, did miraculously relieve their fathers from the house of bondage; did reveal to them his laws, statutes, and commandments; and selected them as his instruments, to make known his beneficent purposes and

* *Lex Visigoth*: lib. xii. Tit. 5 *Ne Judæi more suo celebrent pascha.*

|| *Concil Tolet.* xii. Can. 9.

§ *Baronii Annal. Eccl. ad an. 535, No. 45.*

glorious truths to all mankind: As proceedeth from Zion, and the word Holy Writ declares, "For the law of the Lord from Jerusalem."

V. ESSAY ON THE ANCIENT SCHOOLS OF THE ISRAELITES.

FROM THE בְּכֹרֵי הָעֵתִים: FOR 5583. (1823.)

(Continued from page 388.)

THE Vedah continues: "Strive not to search into the essence and being of the Eternal, or to define the rules of His Providence, which governs the world; the attempt is vain and presumptuous: Rest satisfied with, day by day and night by night, perceiving His Wisdom, power, and goodness in his works: Reflect properly on these, and profit by thy reflections." Either through Abraham himself or by means of some of his Chaldean disciples, these his doctrines penetrated into Persia, where we meet with them in the *Zend-Avesta*; as well as into Hindostanee *vedahs*, whence we have extracted them.

Not content with oral teaching, Abraham in his own conduct afforded the best instruction, and gave the greatest proof of resignation, submission to the Divine will, and faith in his God. He was commanded to travel to a land where famine raged: He did not object. The Deity promised him, all childless as he was, a numerous progeny; and he confided in the Divine promise. Thus this inspired teacher, in his own person, presented the great principles of his doctrines,—submission to God and faith in his word. Accordingly Holy Writ plainly declares this fact: *וַיַּאֲמֵן בְּה'* "He caused * faith in the Lord, (through his own example,) and it was ac-

* Although this verb *אָמֵן*, to believe, confide, or hold fast by, is not at all used in *קל*, but mostly occurs in *הַפְּסִיל*, I have nevertheless presumed to avail myself of the expression peculiar to the latter conjugation, in rendering this most difficult passage.—
AUTHOR'S NOTE.

counted to him as righteousness." (Genesis xv. 6.)

How fully he gained the hearts of his hearers; how strongly he implanted faith and confidence in God, and resignation to the Divine will on their minds, is beautifully expressed in the Talmudic allegory: "R. Simon, the son of Jocha, said, A precious gem was clasped round the throat of our father Abraham. Who-soever was diseased in mind, and looked up to that gem, was instantly healed." (Treatise *Baba Bathra*, folio 16.) This gem was faith, confidence in God, hope of a better Hereafter, which poured its healing balm into the soul of the sufferer. The throat, so closely connected with the organs of speech, is an allusion to his powerful teaching and persuasive oratory.

Chaldea (as is well known) was the cradle of the fantastic science called Judicial Astrology. The worshippers of the astral luminaries trembled at extraordinary appearances or phenomena. An eclipse of the sun or moon denounced the wrath of their gods, and was considered as the precursor and harbinger of inevitable misfortune. The belief was general that future events were legibly revealed by the celestial bodies. Priests, who by means of attentive observations had attained some astronomical experience and skill, and knew the course of the stars, abused the superstitious credulity of their simple contemporaries; and, by arrogating to themselves the power of prognosticating future events, enjoyed great advantages, wealth, and influence.

(To be continued.)

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE Jewish of "A SUBSCRIBER" is under consideration.—"AMICUS" is requested to favour the Editor with his address.

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FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 1835.

VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 19.)

HE * used to say, "In every man whose actions surpass his wisdom, his wisdom becomes permanent; but in every man whose wisdom surpasses his actions his wisdom will not become permanent." (III. 12.)

COMMENTARY. *In every man whose actions surpass his wisdom, &c.*—In the Talmud (treatise *Kedushin*, chap. i.) we read, "All the Rabbies agree in the axiom, that the study of the law is praiseworthy, because it prepares the mind for, and leads it on to, good deeds." The more man occupies himself with studying the law of God, and reflecting on the commandments it enjoins, and the precepts it teaches, the more will his reason assent to the justice of these commandments, the truth and sublimity of these precepts. And the more firmly the conviction establishes itself in his mind, that, in obeying the commandments, and acting up to the precepts, he is pursuing a virtuous and pious course, and doing that which is good, and therefore acceptable to his Maker, the more readily will his soul repel the assaults of temptation, and his heart rejoice in the performance of his duties, and carefully abstain from doing evil: As Holy Writ declares, "When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee, to save thee from the path of evil, and from the man who speaketh perversely; to deliver thee from the strange woman, from the foreign woman, whose speech is flattering; that thou mayest walk in the way of the good, and keep the path of the righteous."

(Prov. ii. 10–12, 16, 20.) Thus we see that the intent and purpose of study is to practise, and that the great aim and end of all learning in the law is, not that we may simply know what it enjoins, but also, and chiefly, that we may obey its behests, and conform to its instruction. This, however, is far more difficult than the bare study: For the nature of man's inclinations and desires is continually at war with the principles of the law. These enjoin that man should entirely devote himself to the service of his Maker; while that points out to him the earth and its fulness, and calls upon him to secure to himself as much of present good as he can possibly attain. The one commands him to love his neighbour like himself; the other tells him he must be his own best friend, to whose prosperity and enjoyment all other considerations must yield. The one directs him not to hate his brother in his heart, not to revenge himself, and harbour resentment in his breast; while the other forbids him to forgive an offence, and tells him that his honour is concerned in avenging injury or insult. The one fetters his passions, and binds down his desires, by the Divine behest, "Thou shalt not covet;" while the other is constantly on the alert, and endeavours to attain freedom and gratification at the cost of whatever tempts his cupidity or lust. Thus we

* R. Chanina, the son of Dosa.

find that a perpetual struggle is going on in the heart and mind of man, between his knowledge of the good and his propensity for the bad. But if a man purifies his heart by duly reflecting on the nature of the Divine laws, and firmly resolves to persevere in the line of duty therein traced out for him, his firmness will decide the struggle: At first his obedience will be difficult, his self-denial painful, and his good intentions and deeds impeded by inward appetites and outward temptations; but, as he persists, as by repeated acts of virtue and piety his mind becomes inured to righteousness, he will find his task more easy, till he becomes a proficient in good deeds, so that his very nature seems changed, and all his faculties and inclinations are centred in one great and absorbing sentiment,—love of God; and all his passions and desires subdued into perfect submission and obedience to the Divine will. This is the frame of mind to which our teacher alludes, when he says, that he “whose actions surpass his wisdom will find his wisdom permanent:” For, as his studies, which implant true wisdom on his mind, can only teach him what is the will of God, and point out to him what are his duties, it must be his actions in conformity to the instruction his wisdom confers on him,—it must be the rules and precepts, which that wisdom has gleaned from the laws of God, embodied and evinced in his conduct,—which bestow permanency on his wisdom; as his every-day practice, his constant performance of those great duties which his studies have traced out for him, will keep his wisdom ever present to his memory, and render it permanent and unceasing, not only in this world, but in the next. For, as it is the intellectual and spiritual part of man which survives the death and decay of the body, that wisdom which, in his lower sphere, gave birth to, and evinced itself in, his actions, in his love and obedience to the Deity, receives its reward in a superior sphere in the contemplation of the Divine perfections, and the enjoyment of eternal bliss.

But, while thus wisdom and good

deeds go hand-in-hand, (and it is only by repeated and constant acts of virtue and piety that man's wisdom becomes permanent,) so, on the contrary, if “his wisdom surpasses his actions,” it cannot become permanent: For as, in the one case, his firmness and strict adherence to duty decides the struggle which is going on in his breast, between his knowledge of the good and his propensity for evil, in favour of the good, so, on the contrary, does his want of firmness, and his deviation from the strict line of duty, decide the struggle in favour of the evil. At first his deviation will be imperceptible; his disobedience trifling; his self-indulgence apparently innocent; and his conscience, aroused and on the alert, will endeavour to impede his evil career by recalling to his memory a sense of his duty, as dictated by wisdom and obedience to the will of God. But, as he persists; as, by repeated acts of disobedience and impiety, his mind becomes inured to wickedness; he will find his course more precipitous and violent, until he become a proficient in evil, so that the voice of conscience is stifled, its pangs blunted, and all his faculties and energies be centred in one great and absorbing sentiment,—self-gratification; and his passions and desires, liberated from all restraint, riot in uncontrolled violence, till exhausted by the force of indulgence. This is the frame of mind which our teacher has in view when he says, “In every man whose wisdom surpasses his actions, his wisdom will not become permanent:” For, as his actions are not in conformity to the rules and precepts which his wisdom has gleaned from the law of God; but, on the contrary, his deeds emanate from his corrupt nature, and are dictated by his evil propensities, the force and influence of which are embodied and displayed in his conduct, it is a necessary consequence, that, as from repeated malpractices his mind becomes hardened, he steels himself against the voice of conscience, and the lessons of his early days: And, in the same degree as the propensity for evil preponderates over the knowledge of good, in their inward struggles for mastery, does true wisdom,

—which we defined to be, “the knowledge man attains from studying the laws of God, and His Holy Word, and the influence which that knowledge ought to and does exercise, to enlighten his mind, to purify his understanding, to set him free from the trammels of error, and to guide him safely through the labyrinth in which passion, desires, and example, combine to involve him;”—become obliterated from his mind; its traces become more faint, until its character is altogether perverted, so that, from being true wisdom, it at length sinks into mere worldly wisdom; nor does it, even as such, maintain its permanency or stability longer than the dread of responsibility, the fear of consequences, retains its sway over the mind. When this, too, wears away, under the frequent indulgence in vice and evil, that which once was wisdom degenerates into cunning; and, as man becomes more daring, his sensibilities blunted, and his dread of detection and shame less keen, he recklessly plunges into the vortex of criminality and sin, than which nothing can be more unwise or foolish.

Thus, it is evident, that, though a man's good actions are, in a great degree, the offspring of his studies, and his wisdom, it is equally true, that man's wisdom depends entirely on the use he makes thereof in his actions; and that the instant he departs, though in ever so small a degree, from the strict line of duty, his wisdom becomes endangered; and that, at every subsequent deviation, that danger becomes greater. Consequently, it is not study only, or the acquisition of wis-

dom, which ought to be the purpose man proposes to himself in assiduously devoting his time and attention to understand the law; but that he may profit by that study, be guided by his wisdom, and practise those precepts which the law teaches him. Accordingly, we find, in the Talmud, (treatise *Berachoth*, folio 82,) Rabbah used to say, “The final use of wisdom is, to improve the heart and mind, and to impress man with a due sense of his own unworthiness and insufficiency.” The observance of the commandments and precepts which the law enjoins is superior to mere study: As the psalmist saith, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and good understanding to those who perform his commandments.” (Psalm cxi. 10.) The sacred singer does not say, ללמודיהם “to those who study them,” but לעושיהם “to those who do them.” And, accordingly, when the Deity vouchsafed to offer his law to the Israelites, their reply was, “All that the Lord hath said נעשה ונשמע we will do and hear.” (Exodus xxiv. 7.) They invert the usual order of expression, which is, “We will hear and do;” thereby to teach us, that our hearing or understanding* the law depends entirely on our doing what it commands; and that, as the performing is the end to which understanding is the means, the former ought, in justice, to take precedence of the latter.

*The word, שמע, “hear” sometimes implies, “understand.” In this sense we find it used: “A nation whose tongue, לא תשמע, thou shalt not understand.” (Deuteronomy xxviii. 49.)

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: “BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:” BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 25.)

DIVISION IV.—INTRODUCTION.

WE are now going to illustrate the third of the great principles of faith, “Rewards and Punishments,” together with the branches that emanate therefrom, and the boughs that are attached to those branches. In the

ninth chapter of our first division we have already stated, that every system of legislation pre-supposes, 1. Volition, or freedom of choice, on the part of those who are to obey; and, 2. A purpose on the part of the legislator. These are, evidently, the first principles of all laws; because,

unless man had the freedom of choice, he could incur no responsibility; and, where no responsibility exists, it is futile to enact laws or punishments. For punishment can only visit the transgressor; and he only is really a transgressor who has the power, and, consequently, the choice, to do or to leave undone. This first principle is so self-evident, that even those who deny the rewards and punishments of a future state are, nevertheless, compelled to admit, that man has perfect freedom of choice; that he is not restrained; but may shape his actions for good or for evil, as his inclinations prompt him. But this volition, or freedom of choice, being thus a principle inherent in every system of legislation, he greatly errs who considers it as peculiarly essential to the Divine laws: For, although these cannot be conceived without freedom of choice, yet this is by no means peculiar to them, but what they have in common with any and every other system of laws. The purpose of the legislator is, likewise, another first principle common to all systems of legislation; and this purpose can be no other than the real good, or at least what the legislator considers as such, of those to whom he addresses his laws. For these reasons we have not treated of these two general principles as exclusively essential to the Divine laws, but have confined ourselves to those three fundamental principles, which, as they are essential to, are likewise exclusively inherent in, the Divine laws. And, having already treated of the two first, namely, "The existence of the Deity," and, "Revelation," we now proceed to illustrate the third great and fundamental principle, namely, "Rewards and Punishments."

But, in order to do this in a manner that will enable our readers clearly to understand and to follow us in the path we have traced out to ourselves, it is needful we should premise, that the order in which we intend to examine our subject is, 1. The omniscience of the Deity; 2. Man's free choice; 3. Providence, or the Divine superintendence of terrestrial affairs; and, 4. Rewards and Punishments, and the matters

thereunto appertaining. This order is prescribed by the very nature of our subject: For, if the Deity does not know, or take cognizance of, man's actions, it is not to be expected that either reward or punishment should await them for their deeds. And, if the Deity does know and take cognizance of human actions, but man has no freedom of choice, he cannot be either punished or rewarded. And, were the Deity to take cognizance of human actions, and were man to be free and uncontrolled in his choice, but the Divine knowledge extended only to the species generally, as it is with every other kind of animals, and did not notice each individual and his actions, so as to chastise every man for his transgressions, and recompense him for his good deeds, no reward or punishment could possibly be adjudged to man. It therefore is evident that until we have established that the Deity does know and take cognizance of this nether creation, that man is a free agent, and that the superintendence of Providence is exercised towards every individual of the human species, we cannot assert that rewards and punishments are a fundamental principle of the Divine laws: As, unless the first three positions are proved, the fourth is a gratuitous assumption. We deem these remarks needful, in order that our line of argument may be perfectly within the reach of our readers; and, when we have made good our first three positions, we shall then commence our examination of the nature of rewards and punishments; a subject of which—together with the details it involves,—such as, penitence, the resurrection of the dead, and the coming of Messiah,—we shall treat with the utmost conciseness; as our wish is, not to overburthen the reflections of the investigating searcher, but to convey an idea or outline to the mind of the believer.

CHAPTER I.

WE have already demonstrated, in our second division, that the Deity must necessarily be exempt from all failings or defects; but, of all imper-

fections, none can be greater than ignorance or want of knowledge. It is, therefore, an absolute and necessary consequence that the Deity must know whatever occurs in the universe, and that nothing can take place of which he is ignorant, or which he does not know. Hence it results, that the Holy One (blessed be HE!) must unavoidably be acquainted with all human actions for which man is accountable. But the question, "Does the Divine knowledge interfere with, control, or determine, human actions?" is one the answer to which requires mature reflection. For if we assume that the Divine Omniscience does in any way interfere with, control, or determine, human actions, man is no longer a free agent, acting from his own choice and will, but is impelled by constraint exercised by a superior power. In that case he is no longer accountable or responsible, and cannot be subjected to punishment, or entitled to reward, as he is acting under the influence of compulsion; and he only can be open to praise or blame, to punishment or reward, whose actions are free, exempt from control or influence, and emanating from his own choice and volition. If, on the contrary, we assume that the Divine Omniscience does not in any way interfere with, control, or determine, the actions of men, it is possible that these actions may produce a something not known to the Deity, or a result with which the Deity is unacquainted; a supposition most preposterous and false, and altogether irreconcilable with any idea that man can form of the Deity. It is proved, both by reason and by the law, that the possibility or power of exercising his free-will is imparted to man by his nature. BY REASON; because, were the possibility or power of exercising his free-will not imparted to man by his nature, then all man's labour, study, and perseverance, would be vain; and the chances of success, of him who strives assiduously to attain an object, and of him who strives not at all, would be equal. In that case, all arts and sciences would be beyond the reach of man; all tuition and learning would be vain; all man's efforts to pursue the

salutary, and avoid the pernicious, would be fruitless; and the words, "human reason," like "human will," would be empty sounds, void of any real meaning; all of which is contrary to the evidence of our senses, and in opposition to the current of every-day experience. While such are the proofs afforded by reason, THE LAW likewise offers its testimony to the same effect, both in its general principles and its particular enactments. *In its general principles*; because, were the possibility or power of exercising his free-will not imparted to man by his nature, the law, which is revealed to men to render them righteous, and to point out to them the path of rectitude, piety, and virtue, would be idle and useless; and the exhortations which it contains, and which call upon man to serve the Lord, to love Him, and to do that which is just and right, would be vain and to no purpose: Nor could we find any meaning for the words of Scripture, "O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children for ever!" (Deut. v. 29.) *In its particular enactments*; because we find numerous precepts and commandments, each of which proves that nature has imparted to man the possibility or power of exercising his free-will: Such are, "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house if any man fall from thence;" (Deut. xxii. 8;) "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him;" (Levit. xix. 13;) and numberless other commandments, the wording of which plainly proves that man is by nature possessed of the power of exercising his free-will. But we go further, and maintain, that, if such were not the case, rewards or punishments awarded to man would be grossly unjust, whether pronounced by the Deity against mankind, or by men against their fellow-men; because he who is not a free agent, who exercises no will of his own, and who acts from any impulse except his own determination, is an involuntary

instrument, and, as such, not accountable or responsible.

Thus two axioms are established :

1. That it is impossible any thing whatever should occur, throughout the universe, without its being perfectly known to the Deity in its minutest details, bearings, and consequences ; as the contrary would infer a want of knowledge, or ignorance, in the Deity ; a defect entirely at variance with the Divine Essence, which is free from all imperfection.
2. That the possibility or power of exercising his free-will is inherent in man from his nature, which is demonstrated by reason and the law : As, were it otherwise, man would not be a free and responsible agent, entitled to rewards, or liable to punishment. But the important question still remains,—how the absolute and necessary knowledge of the Deity is compatible with the free and uncontrolled agency of man ; as, at first sight, these two axioms, each of which separately and by itself is fully established and proved to be true, appear to be altogether contradictory and irreconcilable to each other and to human reason.

R. Saadiah the Gaon,* of blessed memory, in his work on faith and opinions, (Division 4,) says, that the knowledge of the Deity is not the cause of, nor exercises influence on, terrestrial occurrences of a conditional kind ; but that these spring from the natural chain of events, of which one gives rise to the other. In support of this opinion the Gaon further says that, if the Divine knowledge were the cause of or influenced con-

ditional events, these would cease to be conditional, and become continual and unalterable : But, as we see them subject to daily mutations and alternations, essential to their being conditional, it is evident that they must spring from a natural chain, one event leading to another. This species of reasoning is likewise adopted by the learned author of the book "*Cosari*,"* in his fifth division. These opinions, however, cannot be adopted as conclusive or well-founded, as they approximate too closely to the assertions of those who maintain that the Deity does not take cognizance of every action or event : For, if the Divine knowledge is not the cause of, nor exercises any influence on, conditional events, it is possible these may take a direction different from that which is known to the Deity ; in which case his knowledge will be imperfect, which would be contrary to the established axiom. Some writers of a later date have endeavoured to meet the question, and to reconcile the contradiction, by saying that the same thing may be positive when its cause is investigated, although in itself it is conditional. To illustrate this assertion, they adduce as an instance, "It will rain to-morrow." The fact of its raining *to-morrow* is conditional ; whereas the fact that it will rain, is positive ; as is apparent when we investigate the cause of rain ; namely, the rising of mists and watery exhalations from the earth, which, when they attain a certain weight, must descend again in the shape of rain. Thus the Deity knows that the rain will descend to-morrow, such being the necessary consequence of a certain cause, although the fact of its raining to-morrow is in itself conditional, and depends on the quantum of weight which the damp mists will by that time have attained. On this subject a learned author has very ably enlarged ; but, if we maturely

* The title *Gaon*, "illustrious or excellent," was conferred by the Persian monarchs on the *Resh-Glutha*, or Prince of the Captivity, (chief of the Asiatic Jews,) and on the *Reshe-Methibtha*, or Heads of the schools at Sura and Pumbeditha. R. Saadiah, the son of Joseph, born in Egypt in the year 892, was, in the year 928, appointed *Resh-Methibtha*, or Chief of the school at Sura. He was highly celebrated for his learning and piety ; translated the *תנ"ך*, or Old Testament, into Arabic ; (which translation, except the Pentateuch, is lost ;) and wrote largely on grammar, theology, jurisprudence, and expositions of Holy Writ. Most of his numerous works, however, are lost.

* R. Jehuda Levita, a Spanish Rabbi, lived in the middle of the twelfth century, and was celebrated as a philosopher, poet, and grammarian. The book "*Cosari*" relates the conversations and arguments which led to the conversion to the Jewish faith of Bulan king of the Chasars, in the ninth century.

investigate the opinion advanced, we find that it is altogether opposed to the opinion of R. Saadiah, and has a leaning towards those who maintain that there is nothing conditional in the world, but that whatever occurs is a necessary consequence of a positive cause. For, if a thing is positive when its cause is examined, and the Deity has a full knowledge of that cause in its most minute operations, the consequences which result from that cause are necessary and unavoidable; and, if that is the case, what meaning can we attach to the phrase, "conditional in itself?" As the rain (to keep to the illustration offered in support of this opinion) must descend as soon as the floating vapours in the air have reached a certain specific gravity, and cannot descend till then, it is evident the term "conditional" exists merely in idea, and not at all in reality; for that is conditional which may be or may not be. But the instant we assume the cause of any occurrence to be absolute, the consequences are no longer conditional, but inevitable; and, as the Divine knowledge extends to these causes, it follows that nothing which happens in the universe is conditional. Were we to assume that the causes

of events are not positive, but that opposite alternatives are equally balanced, the question arises, "Which is the external influence that causes one alternative to preponderate above the other?" If it is the Divine knowledge, there is an end to the power of free choice inherent in man's nature; if, on the contrary, we say man's free choice inclines the balance, it may infringe on the Divine knowledge. Manifold are the attempts made to overcome this dilemma, but, when we maturely examine all the arguments adduced, we find that their sphere is very limited, as they either incline towards the opinion of R. Saadiah, which is inconsistent with the fulness of Divine knowledge, or towards that of later writers, which is irreconcilable with the free agency of man. We have, therefore, held it needless to adduce the various reasonings made use of by different writers on the subject, in order not to consume the time of the readers in the perusal of opinions which appear to us, as to every reasoning mind, untenable and unfounded. We will, therefore, proceed to state our own views on the subject, after having previously offered a few preliminary remarks.

(To be continued.)

III. MORALITY OF THE RABBIES.

מאמר השכל, "DICTATES OF REASON."

BY THE RABAN.*

I HAVE often observed that many of our nation devote their utmost zeal and attention to practise the commandments contained in the law of God, thinking, that, when they have performed one or more observances, they have fully discharged their duty, and acted up to the purpose for which these observances were enjoined. But how great is their mistake, how obscured is their mental vision, how decided their departure from the path of religion and reason, when they assume that the performance alone is all that is required of them, and that the com-

mandments of the law, and the observances it enacts, have been enjoined without cause or ulterior purpose! Such an assumption is most sinful, as it goes the length of supposing that the Fountain of wisdom, whose providence inspects the deeds of man, has commanded the performance of vain ceremonies or useless observances, and enforces obedience by the dread of punishment; a supposition at once subversive of all religion, and the consequences of which are most fatal to those by whom it is entertained: As our Rabbies truly observed, "Sin leads on to sin;" for, as men think that no reason can be adduced for most of the commandments and observances, although the causes of some are

* R. Eliezer ben Nathan Ashkenazi, author of *Even ha'ezer*, lived at Mayence on the Rhine, about the middle of the twelfth century, and was the contemporary of Maimonides.

known, they at once degrade the enactments of the Most High, which they hold as mere outward ceremonies: And if any obstacle impedes, or danger attends, the observance, they are ready to renounce their allegiance to a law which they consider as useless and without purpose. Nor is this all; but, as they think that their duty is performed by the outward observance alone, independently of that inward intention which must be the result of reflection and choice, they lose sight and become ignorant of the fundamental principles of religion, the great root and foundation of faith, and the pillars by which it is upheld.

Reader, incline thine ear to my words; thou wilt find them useful; therefore, treasure them in thy mind. Think not that I have invented them; or that they are the offspring of mine own understanding. No; as man gathers birds' nests, and climbs high trees to get at them, so have I gathered the sayings of the wise and pious, and have endeavoured to climb up the high and fertile palm-tree of their knowledge. One by one have I examined and adopted their opinions. Therefore, hearken now, and understand the words of the wise, and their dark sayings. If thou wilt open thy heart to my instruction, these my labours will enlighten thy mind, and unfold to thee that which is hidden from those who have eyes, but do not see; whose understanding is darkened; and who continue in the beaten track of habit, doing what they see done by others, without ever raising the question, Why is this? or, in the words of Holy Writ, "What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?" (Deuteronomy vi. 10.)

Know that actions are composed of three parts,—thought, word, and deed. The two last derive their principal merit or demerit from the thought or intention by which they are directed. Accordingly, he who transgresses in his heart or inward mind offends more heinously than he who transgresses in deed or word only. Thus our Rabbies say, "Sinful meditations are worse than actual

sin; for the burnt-offering brought on account of man's sinful thoughts was entirely consumed on the altar of the Lord, which was not done with the sin and trespass-offering brought for sins actually committed." Thought, reflection, and the choice to which it leads, is the peculiar privilege of man, who is created in the image of God: Whereas action, giving way to his appetites, or yielding to the impulse of the moment, is what he has in common with all other animals. The last is incidental to his material conformation; whereas the former is the effect of the intellectual spirit within, on which the free and uncontrolled use of all its powers and faculties has been bestowed, in order that it may, of its own accord, attach itself to the pure and celestial, to which it bears affinity. The one is a slave, the other is free-born; and it is a well-known axiom in law, that he who abuses the labour of a slave does not merit so great a punishment as he who reduces a freeman to bondage, and then abuses his labour.

Know further that all the commandments of the law have each and every one of them deep and profound causes, and are intended for most important and salutary purposes. Those are wrong who assert that the purpose consists only in the performance of outward acts of worship; for, if that were the case, man's obedience would be without any real motive, and his observance consequently vain: a conclusion which both reason and tradition forbid us to adopt. Man is, however, not to say within himself, "I need not observe any commandment until I understand its cause, and perceive its purpose; for, were he to do so, he would resemble the silly boy who refuses to eat bread until he comprehends why the field must be ploughed; how the seed that is sown produces corn; how that corn is cut, and thrashed, and ground into flour; how that flour is sifted, and leavened, and kneaded into dough; and how that dough is baked. Were he to wait until he comprehended all this ere he tasted bread, he would be starved to death. And were man to refuse obedience, and decline per-

forming that of which he cannot comprehend the reason, until that reason becomes clear to him, he would rebel against the revealed will of God, and endanger his soul. But, as in the one case it is proper that the boy should eat, and, as he grows older, by due inquiry gradually arrives at the knowledge he desires to possess; so, in the other case, it is proper that man should obey, while, at the same time, he diligently searches and investigates, until he gradually discovers the cause and purpose for which his observance is required; that thus its merit may become enhanced, as being no longer the result of blind and servile obedience only, but the offspring of mature reflection, and the sincere inward conviction that each and every commandment and observance of the law is enacted with the purpose of promoting man's happiness in this life and in an after-state. For not only does the Holy One (blessed be He!) hereafter reward those who serve him and obey his commandments with a pure heart and enlightened mind, but Holy Writ declares that even temporally such obedience is of the highest utility to man: As it is written, "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me: Keep, therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." (Deut. iv. 5, 6.) What greater proof could be adduced to demonstrate that the laws and observances have each and all a cause most wise, and a purpose most salutary, than the admission, by those who witness the effects produced by them, that the nation by which

they are obeyed is great, wise, and understanding?

Every law, commandment, and observance, has a direct reference to, and bearing upon, the faith and religious impressions, or the moral qualities, of man, in a twofold manner,—positive and negative. Thus, those commandments which have a reference to man's faith and religious impressions are for the positive purpose of confirming within him the principles of the true and good faith, and for the negative purpose of closing his heart and mind against the allurements and seduction of untrue or improper faith. Those which have a reference to, and influence on, man's moral qualities are likewise for the positive purpose of arousing and confirming within him the sense of good, the impulse of virtue, and the conviction that his unqualified obedience is due to the pure precepts of the law; and for the negative purpose of excluding from his heart and mind the propensity for evil, the impulse of the passions, and the wavering irresolution which arises from a man's not having his duties and line of conduct precisely defined. And be not thou surprised that commandments which have a moral purpose only should have found a place in our holy law; for know that it is impossible man should attain that perfection of which in his human capacity he is capable, and which is the stepping-stone of eternal bliss to the immortal soul, unless he attaches himself to that which is morally good, and renounces that which is morally evil. And, as the aim and tendency of the law, and of its commandments and observances, is, to lead man on to the highest degree of perfection which his nature can attain, it became indispensably necessary that moral precepts should form an essential and integral part of the law of God.

(To be continued.)

IV. TALMUDIC ALLEGORIES.

I. THE SUN AND THE MOON.

FROM the council of the Eternal the creating decree went forth: "Two lights shall shine in the firmament. They shall rule the earth, and decide revolving times and seasons."

"He spoke and it was." The Sun arose, the first of lights. As a bridegroom comes forth from his chamber, as a hero rejoices in his victorious career, the glorious luminary proceeded on its course, robed in the radiant splendours of the Creator.

A chaplet of all colours flowed round his head. Earth rejoiced; the herbs sent forth their fragrance; the flowers expanded in beauty.

The second light beheld the splendid sight, and its heart was filled with envy. It saw that its own splendour could not excel the effulgence of the orb of day.

Repining and complaints broke from the orb of night: "Why do two monarchs occupy one throne? Why must I be the second, and not the first?"

And, suddenly, expelled by its inward discontent, the splendid light of the moon vanished. Far it spread in the empyrean, and became the numerous host of stars.

Pale as death stood the moon, downcast and ashamed before the celestial hosts; weeping she prayed, "Have mercy, Father of all beings, have mercy on me!" And the angel of the Lord stood before the darkened luminary, and announced the irrevocable decree: "Because thou hast envied the splendour of the sun, thy radiance will henceforth be borrowed from his light; and, when yonder earth passes thee, thou wilt stand, as now thou dost, deprived of thy light, and eclipsed either wholly or in part. But weep not, orb of the silent night. The All-merciful has pardoned thy repining and granted thy prayer. 'Go forth,' he commanded me, 'console the penitent moon. She too shall be a queen in her radiance. The tears of her repentance shall be a reviving balm to all that languish, imparting new force to all whom the noon-tide heat has exhausted."

The moon was consoled, and, behold, the pale radiance in which still she shines, flowed around her. She entered on her silent career, the queen of night, leader of the attendant stars. Weeping over her own fault, she commiserates the tears that are shed on earth: She sends forth her silvery rays to console those who mourn, to sympathise with those who suffer.

* * * * *

Daughters of beauty, beware of envy. Envy has driven angels from heaven; it has quenched the splendour of the beauteous moon, the silent queen of the night.

II. THE CHILD OF MERCY.

"LET us make man," said the Creator, and myriads of angelic beings listened to his voice. "Do not create him," spoke the angel of justice. "He will wrong his brethren, injure and oppress the weak, and cruelly ill-treat the feeble." "Do not create him," spoke the angel of peace. "He will manure the earth with human blood. The first-born of his race will be an assassin, and murder his own brother."

"He will desecrate thy sanctuary with his lies," said the angel of truth; "and though thou stampest on his countenance thine own image, the seal of truth, yet will falsehood and deceit prevail in his voice." "Create him not; he will rebel against thee, and abuse the freedom which thou bestowest on him," exclaimed the chorus of assembled angels.

Still they spoke, when charity, the youngest and best-beloved of the Eternal's creation, approached his throne, and knelt before him: "Create him, Father," she prayed, "in thine own image; let him be the beloved of thy goodness. When all thy servants forsake him, I will seek and lovingly assist him: His very errors will I turn to his good. I will fill the heart of the weak with benevolence, and render him merciful towards those who are weaker than he. If he depart from peace and truth, if he offend justice and equity, I will still be with him, and the consequences of his own errors shall chasten his heart, and purify him in penitence and love.

The Universal Father listened to her voice, and created man a weak and erring being: But even in his errors, a pupil of the Divine goodness, a child of mercy, love, and charity, which never forsakes him, and still strives to amend him.

* * * * *

Remember thy origin, O man, when thou art cruel and unjust. Of all the Divine attributes, charity alone stood forth to plead that existence be granted to thee. Mercy and love have fostered thee. Then, remember, be just, be merciful.

(To be continued.)

V. EPIC POETRY OF THE HEBREWS.

THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

Translated from the שירי תפארת, of Naphtali Hirz Wessely.

“AND the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihachiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-Zephon ; before it shall ye encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he shall follow after them : And I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord.” (Exod. xiv. 1—4.)

THE dread behest of the Most High, made known
By Israel's faithful chief unto the assembled host,
They cheerfully obey, retrace their steps,
But not with fainting hearts. Firm was their trust
In God ; steadfast, whate'er was his command,
Their confidence and hope. Mizraim's swarthy sons,
Who dwelt in Etham's plains, beheld surpris'd
Israel's returning tribes : Far as these spread,
The question still arose, “ Whence come they here ?
Why do they tarry ? why not onward move ? ”
The hurried messengers, with speed dispatch'd,
Relate unto the king, that “ Israel's sons,
As Etham they approach'd, had, terror-struck,
Refused to enter on the desert vast ;
Confus'd their camp, they move they know not where ;
God hath not led them forth ; base runaways,
They fly, by fear perplex'd.” With greedy ear
The monarch listens to the welcome tale.
Glad, as the captive, who, in fetters bound,
In dungeon dark immur'd, hails the light,
And triumphs in the glorious sound, “ Thou'rt free : ”
So, glad, triumphant, did the tyrant hail
The tidings that, within his reach once more,
The hateful race of Jacob still might feel
His fell revenge, of his keen sword the edge.
Nor he alone ; his courtiers, servile crew,
The chiefs who at his council-board find room,
Partake his joy. Clos'd are the gates of grief
Within their hearts ; wide open those of pride ;
Of arrogance the inward founts o'erflow ;
Full scope unto their evil thoughts they give :
Against the ' Universal Lord they speak ; they rail
Against the man who unto them had been
The minister of fate ; 'gainst Moses loud they rail.
Their hatred rank, their silly pride forgets
That erst, amidst the terrors of the night,
When Mizraim's pride was blighted, they implored,
With accents meek and said, “ Pray tarry not ;
Be free, depart, and leave our land at once.”
Whilst now, with words of scorn and foul reproach,
The proffer'd boon recall'd, they wish them still their slaves :
For Pharaoh's mind is changed ; again he strives
To lord it over those whom late he pray'd, “ Be free.”
His haughty soul repines ; his servants fan the flame

Of anger which within him burns : They say,
 " What have we done ? How could we e'er consent
 That Israel from our bondage be releas'd ?
 Are we the men who, fearless, firm, have braved
 The many perils that assail'd our land,
 Yet, overcome at last by nameless fear,
 Did yield to pestilence, which shunn'd the day ? "
 Each man, abash'd, scarce dared to meet the glance
 Of his associates : Silent all, their looks
 Downcast, averted, stung with shame and wrath,
 Wav'ring they stand, and know not what to do.
 To give revenge its scope, with blood-stain'd sword,
 Force Israel back again beneath the yoke,
 They durst not do. Ruthless as were their hearts,
 'Gainst pity steel'd, harden'd in guilt and crime,
 They trembled still, as memory's faithful voice
 Rung in their ears the horrid shrieks, the groans
 Of agony, which from the dying burst
 On that most fatal night : How, mute with awe,
 They then had stood aghast, and quiv'ring heard
 The piteous accents that despair sent forth,
 Revealing sights that mortal man may not
 Behold and live. As when the mighty wind
 Binds up the waters of a flowing brook ;
 So were the floods of wrath, of arrogance,
 Of cruelty, within their breasts, spell-bound
 By with'ring fear, which cow'd their inmost heart.

Nor yet are they resolv'd : Still they advise,
 And secretly consult, what course to take ;
 Not yet content to own the power of God,
 When fierce His anger did against them burn,
 And seal'd their fate. The tidings scarce were told
 Which Etham's chief unto the king had sent,
 When, sudden, every trace of coward fear
 Has fled their breasts. No terrors more they feel ;
 The memory of former ills is lost,
 Obliterated from their hearts and minds.
 The fearful night, remember'd like a dream,
 Or poet's tale of woe, once heard, forgot,
 Has left no trace. He, the great Lord of all,
 Their spirit who created, and who rules,
 Has wrought the change. His hand impels them on ;
 Harden'd by him, the tyrant's swelling heart
 Is confident and bold, like lion's brood ;
 Harden'd by Him, the madd'ning crew await,
 Greedy of blood, their monarch's dread commands.
 'Gainst Jacob's fated sons their threats they breathe.
 " Pursue and slay ! " with one accord they cry.
 From God was this. The hour of mercy past,
 Destruction is their lot. Onward they rush,
 Till, sunk beneath the foaming billows, lost
 For ever, in the deep abyss they lie,
 No more to rise, their doom eternal fix'd.

Wild roll'd each eye, each mighty bosom swell'd ;
 Surpris'd, each other they behold, and see
 That these, but late a prey to pallid fear,
 Are now to phrenzy wrought, and danger scorn.
 They know not that it is from God,
 Who steels the hearts of this unholy herd.
 The monarch speaks : As yawns the open grave,
 Death to his foes his every word proclaims.
 "Ye heroes ! of my wrath dread ministers !
 Gird on your trenchant swords ; array
 Your coats of mail ; prepare your lofty cars ;
 Collect your hosts ; blow loud the trump of war
 'Gainst Israel's house. That faithless troop of slaves
 With subtle art conspir'd against their king,
 Abus'd our trust, and craftily escap'd.
 Mizraim's wealth, their prey, they with them bear ;
 Then rouse, ye chiefs of Noph ! Zoan's princes, rise !
 Pursue the foe ; your swords with slaughter glut !
 Slay every man !—Women and children be
 Unto your pleasures captive ministers !
 Their wealth is yours ; great booty you will share ;
 And, rescued their plunder, all their thefts disgorged,
 Their flocks, their herds, and what they own, is yours !
 Then up ! prepare ! be bold, and let no fear
 Your ardour damp ! Bethink ye, 't is no war
 With practis'd troops, whose valour equals yours ;
 Whom honour's voice forbids their ground to yield.
 No ! such is not the foe you go to crush ;
 A wretched herd of tim'rous coward slaves ;
 Of feeble undisciplin'd runagates,
 Who, woman-like, know not to fight or flee.
 Bewilder'd in the land, cut off their flight,
 When they behold your firmly-set array ;
 The guile, the craft, the foul deceit and fraud,
 The arts against us which they have devis'd,
 The fearful hour of reckoning and revenge
 Will fill their souls with dread : Abash'd they stand,
 Like thieves caught in the deed ; their weapons sink
 From out their trembling hands ; dismay'd they fly,
 They fall before you ; victory is yours
 And full revenge : For, with unheard-of craft,
 Have these our slaves deceiv'd us. Were we now
 Tamely to' endure, and not chastise the foe,
 We should become a theme of endless scorn
 Unto the neighb'ring states. Dishonour's brand
 On Mizraim's glorious name would fix its stain,
 Never to be remov'd. Then up ! arm ye !
 Gain honour to yourselves, companions brave !
 I lead you on ; ready still I am to share
 Each peril, marching boldly at your head."

He ceas'd to speak : And loud burst forth the cry,
 "Long live the king ; we haste to do or die !"

His wrath, his pride, infected every soul ;

Each man his ardour caught, and long'd to meet the foe.
 His chariot harness'd stood ; his glittering sword
 He girded on ; with careful eye he scann'd
 The numerous chariots in his stores contain'd ;
 Six hundred of the best he singled out,
 The van to lead, under his own command :
 Next in the' array he placed the countless train
 Of gallant chariots arm'd, of horse and foot,
 Marshall'd in troops, each by a chieftain led,
 Whose well-earn'd fame, whose valour, might, and skill,
 Had stood the test of many hard-fought fields.
 No peace nor rest his ardent spirit knew
 Until, his well-plann'd orders all obey'd,
 He joy'd to think that glory and revenge,
 Within his grasp, promis'd success complete.
 Short time for preparation he allow'd ;
 His warriors need it not. Onward they throng ;
 Their banners gay float proudly in the air ;
 Their valiant sov'reign leads the mighty host.
 No care he knew ; no fear oppress'd his mind ;
 The issue is assur'd ; and, certainty his hope :
 Each warrior in his train despis'd the foe ;
 In every eye exulting triumph beam'd ;
 The shouts of victory ascend the sky,
 As were the contest closed, the battle fought and won.

The tyrant, in his pride and ire, pursued
 Israel's tribes, who west of Etham camp'd.
 Fearless and void of every care were they ;
 With a high hand from Mizraim they went out ;
 No thought had they of foes or of pursuit.
 The wondrous cloud, appointed by their God,
 Led their advance : Before His matchless might
 Each hostile cheek would blanch, each heart would quail.
 But woe unto the tyrant ! woe !—The day
 Of God's avenging justice is at hand.
 It overtakes him in his headlong course :
 No human power can stop him, or can save.
 On to the gates of death he rushes mad :
 He yielded not,—presumptuous to the last.
 E'en fiery flames affright him not, nor turn
 Him from his aim ; till, utterly destroy'd,
 He perisheth ; so harden'd were by God
 The hearts of Pharaoh and his hosts. They came
 Near Pi-hachiroth, where their eyes beheld
 The pillar of the cloud, yet fear'd they not ;
 Their strength was undecay'd, their arm, their trust.
 'Gainst God, against the nation of his choice,
 Battle array they set : Proud they rejoice
 That Israel's house they soon should prostrate see !
 Thus, when the Lord hardens the heart of fools,
 To ev'ry fear impervious, what can turn
 Their darken'd, stubborn minds ? His wondrous works
 Unmov'd they view : Their folly looks upon

Creation's splendid glories, and derides
 Them but as vain, not worthy of a thought.
 Regardless of the cloud, Mizraim's host
 Moves like a whirlwind on. In front,
 The chosen chariots by the king led on ;
 Behind, in long array, his countless bands,
 All mighty warriors, led by doughty chiefs.
 To Pi-hachiroth soon they come, and reach
 To Baal-zephon, where the tribes encamp'd
 Along the spreading borders of the sea.
 The king in person, with his chosen guard,
 Israel beheld, and marvell'd at the sight ;
 They knew not why he came, nor his intent ;
 Not yet his errand hostile they believ'd,
 For who would dare to' assail the camp of God ?
 Nor did the numbers that surround the king
 Lead them to think that war his purpose was.
 They turn them right and left, to see if hosts
 Of men-at-arms follow the royal train.
 The fearful truth soon flash'd upon their minds ;
 Mizraim's countless armies they behold,
 Chariots and horse, the panoply of war,
 The num'rous bands of foot in firm array ;
 Then knew they that with fell intent the king
 To give them battle came. Amaz'd they stood !
 Slaves from their birth, no gen'rous courage, they,
 Nor gallant ardour, knew ; trembling with fear,
 No hearts had they to stem the tide of war.
 Their days in lime-kilns pass'd, their hands were used
 To lift the hod, but not to wield the spear.
 No swords they drew ; their clarions still hung mute ;
 No stern defiance did their trumpets breathe ;
 Prostrate in prayer, to God they lift their hearts ;
 And in their need his mighty aid implore :
 " O God, our help ! hast thou in vain thy pow'r,
 Thy wondrous might, display'd ? Hast thou in vain
 Thy dreaded signs upon the' oppressor wrought ?
 'T is true that with thine outstretch'd arm thou hast
 From bondage freed, from Mizraim led us forth ;
 Yet these thy haughty foes thy pow'r deride :
 Their heads they shake ; smile in contempt of thee ;
 And unto slaughter doom whom thine arm shields.
 The bow they bend, the arrow wing'd adjust ;
 With flaming swords they march against thy camp.
 If they assail us, we are lost ; no hope,
 No succour have we, but thine aid alone :
 For who are we, that we should wage the fight
 Unequal, 'gainst fell warriors proud in arms ?
 Then hear our pray'rs, in mercy hear, O God !
 Rise in thy might, thine enemies lay low,
 Ere, like a flood, they pour into our camp.
 Destroying us, they triumph over thee."

Instant relief they hop'd ; short the delay

Which saw their hopes fulfill'd : But yet to them
 Too long it seem'd. Their foes still onward press ;
 Their step not hinder'd by the fear of God.
 Israel's heart had almost ceas'd to beat ; their faith,
 Their hope, their confidence, to terror yield.
 God's counsels wise they cannot scan : His word
 No more they trust ; in bitterness of soul
 They clamour : Moses, with reproaches rude,
 And dire complaints, they urge : " Prophet of God,
 Who know'st the secrets of Omnipotence,
 Boast not thy splendid deeds ; here must we die.
 Talk not to us of glorious liberty,
 To slaughter doom'd, in vain thou sett'st us free.
 Was it because Ham's wide-spread fields no space
 Afford to yield us graves, that, to be slain,
 Into the desert thou must lead us, there,
 All smear'd with gore, and naked on the sand,
 To be the ravens' feast, the panthers' food ?
 The day remember, when, in Goshen's plains,
 Thou first didst tell us, that, by God's command,
 From bondage freed, we were to follow thee
 Into the desert ; even then we fear'd
 The ill which now destroys our fated race :
 We told thee then, ' Depart and get thee hence ;
 Better it is for us to live as slaves,
 Than in the desert fall by Pharaoh's sword.' "

(*To be continued.*)

VI. ESSAY ON THE ANCIENT SCHOOLS OF THE ISRAELITES.

FROM THE בכורי העתים : FOR 5583. (1823.)

(*Continued from page 32.*)

ABRAHAM lived at a period when belief in astrology had reached its acmé. The desire to pry into futurity doubtless led him to undertake those astronomical observations which, as we have already related, eventually caused him to acknowledge the unity and omnipotence of the Creator. Though he ceased to consider the stars as deities, still he could not discard the belief that their aspects exercised considerable influence on the fate of man. Ancient tradition, founded on the words, ויוצא אורנו החוצה "He led him forth abroad," (Genesis xv. 5,) adds to the conversation in Holy Writ the following :—

Abraham.—Lord of the universe, is my domestic, Eleazar, to be my heir ?

The Lord.—No ! Thine own offspring will be thy heir.

Abraham.—But I read from the astral aspects, that I must not expect any offspring.

The Lord.—Desist from thy astrological vanities. The stars can have no influence over thy promised seed.*

Thus the words, "He led him forth," convey the meaning, that the Lord led Abraham forth out of the errors of his astrological predilections.

The mind of the Patriarch, thus freed from the erroneous impressions of pseudo knowledge, originated the purer science of astronomy, which as has been already stated he publicly taught and promulgated in Egypt.

* Talmud, treatise *Sabbath*, folio 156.

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I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 35.)

HE * likewise said, "Whomsoever the spirit of mankind approves of, (or is gratified with,) the Spirit of Omnipotence likewise approves of. But whomsoever the spirit of mankind does not approve of, (or is not gratified with,) the Spirit of Omnipotence does likewise not approve of." (III. 13.)

COMMENTARY. *Whomsoever the spirit of mankind approves of, &c.*—The duties incumbent on man are of a three-fold nature: 1. Those he owes to his Creator; 2. Those he owes to himself; and 3. Those he owes to his fellow-creatures; but, though they thus form three distinct classes, they are so intimately connected that it is impossible he should properly acquit himself of one class of his duties, while he is violating either of the other two. Thus it is impossible that the man who is careless of his own health, welfare, and moral conduct; who is cruel, oppressive, or deceitful towards his fellow-men; can be truly pious, God-fearing, and performing those duties with a sincere heart which he owes to his God: As it is equally impossible that a man, abandoned in his own conduct, and neglecting the sense of duty incumbent on him towards his God, should at the same time be truly observant of his duties towards his fellow-men: For, however rigidly honest and honourable, however truly philanthropic and generous, he may be in his intercourse with them, the force of his pernicious example is calculated to injure them more than his mundane virtues can do them good. Again: He who is negligent of his duties to God, and performs not those which he owes his fellow-men, cannot be

properly observant of those which are due to himself; as the first of these duties is, that he should fear his God, and do what is right towards his fellow-men. Accordingly the prophet says, "It hath been told to thee, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah vi. 8.) The prophet here not only tells mankind of their three-fold duty, but likewise instructs them that it is not the performance of one class of duties only that the Deity requires of man, but that of all three classes; because they are so closely connected and entwined, that it is impossible we should properly acquit ourselves of any one of them while we violate another.

It is this connexion between the distinct classes of our duties, and the inseparable relation which the performance or omission of one bears to that of the others, which our teacher here wishes to impress on our minds. He therefore tells us that whomsoever the spirit of mankind in general approves of will likewise meet with the approbation of the Omnipotent Spirit: Or, in other words, he who scrupulously and zealously acquits himself of his duties towards his fellow-men, (among the first of which is the obligation of not offending by evil

* R. Chanina, the son of Dosa.

example,) and who, by his moral, pious, upright, and benevolent conduct, secures to himself the approbation of those who have the best opportunities of observing him, proves, by the very fact of his performing one class of duties incumbent on him, that he likewise sincerely observes those duties which are incumbent on him towards his Creator; and which procures for him the approving countenance of the Omnipotent Spirit. Should the question be asked, why our teacher only speaks of the approbation of our Creator and of our fellow-men, and does not expressly mention self-approval, and the duties man owes to himself; the answer is, that the duties man owes to himself are subordinate to those he owes to his Creator, and so completely co-ordinate with those he owes to his fellow-men, that, however in appearance sincerely pious and strictly honourable he may be, it is impossible that the approval of God or of man should be yielded to him, if he is careless or negligent of what he owes to himself: For the Lord, who sees the heart, has declared that He requires of man the performance of each of the three classes of duties incumbent on him. And mankind, though they may give such a man praise for his mundane virtues, will, nevertheless, not yield their unqualified approbation to one who, by neglecting what he owes to himself, causes great offence by his improper example, and thereby counteracts the gratification which otherwise would be felt at his social conduct. Thus we see that, mentioning the two-fold approbation of God and man, he comprises self-approval, and the duties man owes to himself.

In the maxim now before us, our teacher inculcates an important moral lesson, and one which no man ought to neglect profiting by; namely, to attach a just value to public opinion. There are men actuated by good motives, but who undervalue public opinion; who say within themselves, "It is true, such an action as I am now about to undertake may to the world appear wrong; but I know my motives and intentions are pure; God sees the

heart; what need I care for the opinion of others? Mankind are so perverse, governed by a code of false honour; their opinions are formed with so little judgment, and they are so prone to think ill of their neighbours, that I need not and will not concern myself about their approval or blame. I go my own way, and do what I feel persuaded is for the best, let them think of me as badly as ever they may."—It is against this self-opinionated view that our teacher cautions us. He tells us, the love of virtue and admiration of the good are innate in man; he never entirely loses either of these feelings. It is true that man, as an individual, may be, and most frequently is, misled by his passions, by the force of temptation and desire; that he often does wrong; and that his isolated estimation of any man or of any action may be prejudiced and influenced by his own weakness and follies; but such is not the case with mankind at large. Man, formed to be a social animal, carries his individual virtues into the social stock, while his private failings remain his own. And, though the individual opinion of every member of society is biassed by his personal views, and dependent for its correctness on his greater or less strength of mind and force of reason, yet, when this individual diversity is lost, or completely blended in general unanimity of opinion, that is itself a great proof that the general opinion is correct; for such is the frame of man's mind and heart, that, though he himself may be too feeble to perform a good, or to abstain from an evil, action, yet his inward feelings will compel him to applaud the one, or to censure the other; and, though interest or envy may induce the individual man to suppress the expression of his feelings, considerations like these cannot and do not influence mankind at large. It is, therefore, an almost certain criterion that the action or the man, that general opinion pronounces to be good, is actually so; as, on the contrary, the man or action that the general voice declares to be bad is likewise actually so. And as in the one case they approve, and in the other disapprove, their

decision is confirmed by the Divine approval or disapprobation. In this sense a wise man of the Romans said, "The voice of the people is the voice of God ;" adopting the maxim of our teacher, that, whomsoever the spirit of mankind is gratified with, the Spirit of Omnipotence likewise approves. It is not therefore becoming, that a man should lay the flattering unction to his soul that his motives are pure, when he undertakes an action which he is apprehensive his fellow-men will censure. He slights their opinions, because he knows that individuals are liable to err, that they are swayed by their private interests and private feelings, that self-love is apt to blind their judgment, and vanity to bribe their understanding : But he forgets that he himself is likewise an individual ; and, as such, equally with any other man, liable to err, to be swayed by his private interest and feelings, to be blinded by self-love, or bribed by vanity. Is not the very fact, that he sets up and maintains his own opinion, in defiance of that of his fellow-men, a sufficient proof that egotism and vanity have been busy at his heart ? that he listens to the promptings of the one, and inhales the intoxicating fumes of the other ; until he exclaims, in the fulness of his pride, "I alone am above the common standard of erring humanity ; I alone am therefore the best judge of mine own actions ! What, if mankind censures me ! I know I am doing right." No ; our teacher tries to arrest him at the brink of the precipice, and calls to him, "Remember, there is One who seeth the heart, and judgeth the inward motives, of man. He does not approve what all mankind censures ; for their unanimous censure is bestowed on that only which is really evil ; but He does approve that which all mankind approves ; for their unanimous approbation is afforded to that only which is really good. Therefore slight not the voice of public opinion ; uphold not that to be good which all mankind agree to consider as evil ; think not that thou alone art the most proper judge of thine own actions, but remember, Holy Writ commands thee to yield to the ma-

jority ; (Exodus xxiii. 2 ;) and what more decided majority can there be than the universal opinion of mankind against thy own unsupported views ? Do not slight the value of public opinion, for just is the assertion of the wise monarch, "A good name is better than precious ointment ;" (Eccles. vii. 8 ;) which our Rabbies explain by saying, "There are three crowns : The crown of the law, the crown of the priesthood, and the crown of royalty ; but the crown of a good name is superior to all of them." (Treatise *Aboth*, iv. 13.) So that the enjoyment of a good name, and the approbation of mankind, are more valuable than the adventitious advantage of birth, or even the more real advantage of learning and knowledge of the law.

The three maxims which R. Chanina ben Dosa lays down are closely connected with each other, and respectively bear a reference to one of the three distinct classes of duties that man is called upon to perform. The first, "In every man whose dread of sin precedes his wisdom," &c., he shows man the duty he owes to his God, which is, to fear offending or sinning against him. This fear of sinning is not so much the dread of punishment which awaits the transgressor, as a contemplation of the Divine perfections, a feeling of awe at the infinite excellence of the Deity, and a mental impression of the heinous enormity and ingratitude man is guilty of when he sins against the great and universal Benefactor, the Author and Giver of all good, to whose inexhaustible bounty all creatures are indebted for existence, preservation, and happiness ; and who, in issuing his commandments, and revealing them to mankind, has no other intention than that man should be as perfectly happy as his nature admits, both here and hereafter. In the second, "In every man whose actions surpass his wisdom," &c., our teacher shows us the duty we owe to ourselves ; which is, by firmness and self-denial to decide the inward struggle between our knowledge of the good and our propensity for evil ; and to persevere in doing good actions, so that we may become proficient, and the habit of acting vir-

tuously may grow upon us as a second nature. In the third, "Whomsoever the spirit of mankind approves of," &c., he points out to us our duty to our fellow-men; which is, so to regulate our actions and conduct, that they may command that (even involuntary) approbation of mankind which is only yielded with unanimous consent to what is really good. And he tells us what is our reward, and from whom we are to expect it. Riches, honour, or power is not the recompense which awaits us. No; far higher is the reward of him who dreads sin, and whose actions surpass his wisdom, and with whom the spirit

of mankind is gratified. It is, that the Spirit of Omnipotence vouchsafes to grant him His approval; and, therefore, his wisdom is permanent, ceases not with the frail tenement in which the immortal soul is lodged, but, when the dust has been gathered to its parent earth, wings its flight to its own pure and heavenly home, there, amidst the celestial hosts, to take its station in endless bliss: As the prophet declares, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.)

(*To be continued.*)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(*Continued from page 39.*)

CHAPTER II.

Know that the professors of speculative sciences do not all agree in their fundamental rules, but, on the contrary, they are decidedly at variance in their first principles and premises. The professors of any particular science receive the first principles on which their science rests as so many incontrovertible axioms, the truth of which they take upon themselves to demonstrate with the utmost exactitude of proof and deduction; nay, they even go so far as to consider and treat every one who cannot understand, or who denies their theorem, as foolish and ignorant: While the professor of another science not only denies the first principles which the former deem infallible, but, with equal pertinacity and confidence, maintains the truth, and demonstrates the correctness, of principles diametrically opposed to them. Such, for instance, is the case with the astronomer and the natural philosopher. The astronomer lays down two principles of motion, on which the whole theory of his science is based, namely, the revolution in an orbit, and the rotatory movement round an (imaginary) axis; while the natural philosopher rests the theory of his science on principles of motion quite different from the former. He

assumes a three-fold principle; namely, that to the centre of gravity, that from the centre, and that round the centre. He moreover asserts, that no revolving movement is possible, except round a fixed and material axis. Here then we find the first principles of these two sciences in direct opposition to each other; as the revolving motion which the astronomer assumes is neither to the centre nor from the centre, nor does he allow a fixed or material axis round which the planets revolve; so that the two sciences seem irreconcilably at variance; each invoking the evidence of the senses and of experience, in aid of a system which the other as strenuously rejects. Such is likewise the case with the astrologer and the philosopher: The latter calls in question the prescience and omniscience of God, while he asserts the free agency of man. The astrologer maintains the absolute prescience of the Deity, and asserts that man is subject to fate, regulated according to the planetary influences in their aspects and conjunction, as predetermined by the Deity; that, accordingly, what the Deity has predestined must happen; so that man's free agency is entirely out of the question. The professor of the Divine laws reconciles both: For, with the philosopher, he maintains

the free agency inherent in man, which he proves by the evidence of the senses, as we stated in the foregoing chapter; and, with the astrologer, he maintains the Divine omniscience, which he proves by reason; which dictates, that it is impossible to ascribe to the Deity any imperfection, (as all defects are irreconcilable to the Divine Essence,) and least of all, one so glaring as ignorance or want of knowledge; and that, therefore, it is unavoidably necessary that the Divine knowledge should comprise whatever occurs in the universe. And to demonstrate that both are compatible, he adduces the evidence of experience, which proves that such is the case, however incomprehensible to human reason: And in this his argument runs parallel with that which eventually decides the dispute between the astronomer and the natural philosopher; namely, that, as each of their sciences rests on certain principles, which experience demonstrates to be respectively true, the compatibility of these principles, however apparently irreconcilable to reason, is nevertheless founded in fact.

CHAPTER III.

HAVING thus pointed out how the professors of different speculative sciences are at variance with each other; even in the first or fundamental principles on which the theory of their respective sciences rests, we now go on to state, that it behoves man to base his principles of faith on the joint evidence of the senses, of experience, and of reason, as supported by Divine revelation. This combined evidence, supported and strengthened by revelation, upholds the principles of the professor of the Divine laws, who asserts the free agency of man inherent in his nature, and the knowledge of the Holy One, (blessed be HE!) extended to individual human actions, as evinced by means of the prophets: And the Divine providence, extended to individual men; as, for instance, to the patriarchs in all the events that occurred to them; or to the nation of Israel when they went out of Egypt, according to the history and tradition at present in our hands;

—and to many other individuals, as well as nations, who are mentioned in the different books of the prophets: Nor will we assent to the assertion of the speculative philosopher, who denies this fulness of Divine knowledge and providence, any more than we would assent to any other assertion which should be fully at variance with the evidence of the senses, of experience, and of reason, supported by Divine revelation. For, as we have already stated, the evidence of the senses and of experience must in all cases be joined to, and confirm, the evidence of reason, which alone is insufficient, because there are many things the true state of which is altogether beyond the reach of human reason, and many other things which, though experience and the evidence of the senses prove their existence, yet reason is unable to define the cause of their being: As, for instance, the daily rotatory motion. It is impossible to deny a daily movement which the existence of the senses and experience prove to us, in the alternation of day and night; but it is equally impossible for human reason to define and explain the cause of that movement.*

Nor are the heavenly phenomena the only ones the causes of which our reason cannot comprehend or define; but, in terrestrial matters, there is many an effect evident to our senses, and invariably approved by experience, for which our reason is altogether unable to assign or define the cause; as, for instance, the attractive power of the magnet. We see its influence on iron; experience demonstrates that this influence is not casual, but constant and invariable; and yet our reason is completely at a loss to discover what is the cause of the attractive faculty of which the magnet is possessed. And many more similar instances may be adduced to prove that human reason of itself, and unaided, is insufficient to be man's guide, but that the evidence of the senses and of

* The Author here, and in the next chapter, enters into a long astronomical and astrological dissertation, which, resting on a system altogether exploded at the present day, we have thought proper to omit.—THE EDITOR.

experience must be called to its aid, and that it is only on the joint testimony of the three, supported by the truth of revelation, that man can rest his principles of faith. It therefore does not become us to deny either of the two axioms laid down in our first chapter of this division; namely, 1. That it is impossible any thing should occur throughout the universe without its being perfectly known to the Deity, in its minutest details, bearings, and consequences; as the contrary would infer a want of knowledge, or ignorance, on the part of the Deity; a defect entirely at variance with the Divine essence, which is free from all imperfection: And, 2. That the possibility or power of exercising his free-will is inherent in man from his nature; which is demonstrated by the evidence of the senses, of experience, and reason, supported by the testimony of the law: As, were it otherwise, man would not be a free and responsible agent, entitled to rewards, or liable to punishment. We say, it does not become man to deny either of the above two axioms; because our reason is insufficient to discover the cause which renders compatible the apparently irreconcilable effects of Divine knowledge, and human free agency. As regards the first, we say that it is a well known axiom, "God does not know by means of knowledge, or exist by means of life;" that is to say, we cannot separate His knowing and His being from His own essence. He and his knowledge are not distinct things, as is the case with man, but, like all the Divine attributes, are inherent, absolute, and unconditional in his essence. Now we have already at great length demonstrated, in our second division, how utterly impossible it is for man to conceive the Divine essence, because God's perfection is infinite and complete, whilst man's powers of conception are finite and defective. And, as God's knowledge is one with His essence, it is as impossible for human understanding to define the nature and manner of operating of perfect knowledge, as it is to define the nature and operations of Omnipotence, of infinite duration, or any other

attributes of the Divine essence; the very words we use to express which, we cannot properly define to others, or understand ourselves. All that we can comprehend is that, as his knowledge is perfect, and, therefore, altogether different from human knowledge, (inasmuch as it is exempt from all those failings and deficiencies which must be inherent in every attribute of our finite existence,) it must in its operation likewise be widely different from our knowledge; and that, therefore, man acts both wrongly and foolishly when he attempts to subject Divine omniscience to the same accidents which govern human knowledge, or to define the operation of the former by the same rules and principles which are applicable to the latter. Accordingly, we find this argument made use of by Isaiah, when he reproves those who deny the omniscience of the Deity. He says, "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding." (Isaiah xl. 27, 28.) "Hast thou not known" from reflection, "hast thou not heard" from the instruction of thy fathers and their tradition; "that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator?" &c.; that this Being must be absolute, inherent, and unconditional; that he is the First Cause of all existence; the Lord of all; a separate intelligence; not material or corporeal, nor limited to material or corporeal faculties? It thence follows, that he must be primary, eternal, and everlasting, and possessed of all those attributes which are essential to Him whose existence is absolute, inherent, and unconditional. This Being, himself infinite, is the first and sole cause of all finite creation. In Him there is no imperfection: Neither such as result from the want of power, for "he fainteth not;" nor such as result from a want of purpose, change or mutability of intention, for "he is not weary." Such being the powers and

attributes of the Most High, how is it possible that man, who knows Him to be primary, eternal, and everlasting, a separate and immaterial intelligence, a Being whose existence is inherent, absolute, and unconditional; how is it possible that man should attempt to define the nature and operation of his knowledge?—How can human reason and knowledge explain the possibility how a separate and immaterial intelligence could give existence to a material world, or how an infinite Being could call forth a finite creation? All our reason and knowledge will be found insufficient and at fault to explain how and why this was done: And, whatever our pride or arrogance, we are compelled to own that God alone can know the cause of this, because he alone is infinite and all-perfect; but our reason and knowledge cannot presume to bring our investigations to a satisfactory result, because we are finite and greatly imperfect. Therefore, the prophet concludes with saying, "There is no searching his understanding." Why should ye presume to lay down one of two alternatives; either, "my way is hid from the Lord," in which case his knowledge is imperfect; or, "my judgment (destiny) is passed over (gone forth) from God;" in which case man is not a free agent? Your alternative would be reasonable were the Divine knowledge finite like your own; subject to change or alternation, arising from certain external impres-

sions or influences; and limited in its manner of operation. But, as all this is not the case with infinite knowledge; as you cannot search into or explain the Divine understanding; you therefore must not presume to define its operations by saying that the Divine knowledge is incompatible with human freedom of action; for, when you do so, you degrade it to a level with your own; whereas, you yourselves must confess that it is infinitely your superior, and that you cannot comprehend His knowledge any more than you can comprehend His essence. In this sense our Rabbies, of blessed memory, said in *מסכת אבות*, "Ethics of the Fathers," (chap. xxxvi.) "Every thing is foreseen, though free choice is given to man." By the first part of their maxim they tell us, that the Divine knowledge extends to every occurrence throughout the universe, and that nothing happens accidentally or without the Divine prescience. By the latter of their maxims they tell us, that this Divine omniscience and prescience does not in any way interfere with, control, or determine human actions; but that the possibility or power of exercising his free-will, which is inherent in man by his nature, is altogether unconstrained. Thus both axioms are incontrovertibly true, although the imperfection of our reason does not permit us to discover how their apparent incompatibility is reconcilable.

(To be continued.)

III. TALMUDIC ALLEGORIES.

(Continued from page 42.)

THE INFANCY OF ABRAHAM.

ABRAHAM was reared in a cavern; for, the tyrant Nimrod, forewarned by his astrologers that the infant son of Terah would teach mankind to renounce the service of the imaginary divinities which Nimrod worshipped, sought to take his life. But in the darksome cavern, the light of God illumined his youthful mind: He reflected, and asked himself, "Whence am I? Who has created me?"

He had reached the age of sixteen

years, when he left his dreary abode, and, for the first time, beheld the heavens and their resplendent orbs, the earth and its fulness. How astonished was he, and how rejoiced! He interrogated all creation around him: "Whence are ye? Who has created you?"

The sun arose in its glory. Abraham prostrated himself. "This," he exclaimed, "must be the Creator: Great and beauteous is its appearance; its radiance dazzles my feeble eye."

The sun pursued its course, and

set at even-tide, to make room for the silvery moon: And Abraham said to himself, "The luminary which has set cannot be the God of heaven: It yields to yonder lesser light, and to the hosts of stars by which it is attended."

But clouds overspread the sky; the moon and the stars were hidden from his sight; and Abraham stood alone in the midst of his meditations.

He went to his father, and asked, "Who is God, the Creator of heaven and earth?" Terah showed him his idols. "I will put their divinity to the test," said Abraham to himself; and, when he was alone, he presented them with the choicest viands, addressed them, and said, "If ye are living Gods, accept my offering that I may worship you." But unmovable stood the idols; no ear had they for his invocations.

"And these," exclaimed the youth, "my father considers as Gods! But perhaps I may show him he is in error." He took a staff, and shivered the idols into fragments, except one only, within whose bended arm he placed his staff. He then hurried to his father, and said, "Father, thy great God has slain his lesser brethren."

But Terah looked at him in anger, and said, "Mock me not, boy! How can he do what thou hast said, since mine own hands have fashioned him who is inanimate?" And Abraham replied: "Be not angry, O my father, but let thine ear hear, and thy reason weigh, what thine own mouth has uttered: If thou deemest him incapable of a feat which my boyish hand was capable of performing, how can he be the God whose power created thee and me, and the heaven and earth?"

And Terah stood silent before the reproof of his son. * * *

But the fame of Abraham and of his deed soon reached the ear of the tyrant Nimrod, who summoned the youth before him, and thus sternly spoke: "*My* God thou *must* serve, or the burning fiery furnace awaits thee."

"And who, O king, is thy God?" inquired the undaunted Abraham.

"The fire is my God, the mighti-

est of all beings;" answered the king.

"Fire," replied the youth, "is quenched by water: Water is borne by the clouds: The clouds are scattered by the wind: But man defies the peltings of the storm and the blast of the wind: Thus man is the mightiest of beings."

"And I am the mightiest of men," exclaimed the king, "adore *me* then, or the burning fiery furnace awaits thee."

But Abraham fixed his sparkling eye on the king, and said, "Yesterday at morn I beheld the sun arise, and I saw it set in the evening. Command now, O king, that the sun arise at eventide and set in the morning: then will I worship thee."

The king deigned no further reply, but at a sign from him the youth was led off and hurled into the midst of the fiery furnace.

But the force of the fire harmed not the dauntless martyr: An angel of the Lord received him in his arms, and fanned the flames away from him: They refreshed him like the fragrance of roses. Beauteous and radiant, the youth went forth from the furnace; and soon God appeared to him, and summoned him to forsake Chaldaea, and go to the land which he would show him.

And Abraham became the founder of the true worship of God, who created heaven and earth, to all the human beings that inhabit the terrestrial globe.

THE POWER OF TEARS.

THREE days Isaac was dead in the heart of Abraham; for, God had chosen him as a burnt-offering, and the father refused not obedience. Silently Abraham ascended the steep height of Moriah, lost in painful reflection, when the friendly voice of his child aroused him: "Behold, my father! we have fire and wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering!" And onward they wound their way in silence.

And they came to the place of which God had told Abraham; and

he built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son, and he cast one look of anguish up to heaven: For the boy lay mute upon the altar: He neither complained nor remonstrated, but he silently lifted his streaming eyes to heaven. The silent tear that glistened in the eyes of both, pierced the sky: Its mute appeal ascended to the heavens, and pleaded before the mercy-seat of Him before whom silence is equal to eloquence.

And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" and he said, "Here am I:" And he said, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him."

Joyfully the father received the destined victim, the son who was restored unto him; and he called the scene of his anguish and joy, "The Lord seeth." He seeth the silent tear in the eye of the sufferer: He seeth the mute anguish of the heart, which implores more fervently than the loudest appeal.

* * * * *

Three-fold are the prayers of man to God; and their efficacy is also ascending in its degrees.

The quiet prayer of the heart is acceptable to the All-merciful: He hears, and graciously receives it from the moving lip.

The loud cry of distress in the hour of need pierces the sky, and heaps burning coals on the head of the oppressor.

But, more mighty than these is the mute tear of the sufferer, who steadfastly cleaves to his God, even though he dies. It forces the gates of heaven, bursts locks and bolts, appears before the throne of mercy, and calls down the look of Him who indeed "seeth."

THE DEATH OF MOSES.

WHEN MOSES, the faithful messenger of God, was to die, and his hour approached, the Lord assembled his angels, and said, "It is time to recall the soul of my servant: Who among you will go and summon her to come into my presence?"

Then the princes of the angelic host, Michael and Gabriel, with all who stand before the throne of the Lord, implored, and said, "We are his: He has been our teacher; then let not us summon the soul of this man."

But Sammael, the leader of the rebellious angels, stood forth, and said, "Behold, here am I, send me:" And he went.

Arrayed in wrath and cruelty, he descended, wielding the flaming sword in his right hand: He rejoiced beforehand at the agony, the death-throe of the righteous. But when he came nearer, he beheld the face of Moses: *His eyes were not dim, nor his natural force abated.* The servant of the Lord wrote the words of his last song and the sacred name: His countenance was resplendent, radiant with the peace and brightness of heaven.

The enemy of mankind stood abashed: His sword dropped out of his hand, and he hurried away. "I cannot bring the soul of this man," he said to the Lord; "for in him I have found nothing impure."

And the Lord descended to summon the soul of his faithful and beloved servant. Michael and Gabriel, and the host of angels that stand before him, followed in his train. They prepared Moses's bier, and surrounded it; and a voice was heard, "Fear not, I myself will bury thee."

Then Moses prepared himself to die, and sanctified himself even as one of the seraphim sanctifieth himself: And the Lord called unto his soul and said, "My daughter! one hundred and twenty years is the term allotted for thy inhabiting my servant's earthly tenement. The time is expired; then come forth, and tarry not."

And Moses's soul answered, and said, "O Lord of the universe! I know that thou art God, the sovereign Ruler of all spirits and of all souls, and that the living and the dead are alike in thy hand. From thee I received thy glorious law: I saw thee in the flame: I ascended and went along the path towards heaven: Girt with thy power, I entered the palace of Egypt's king: I

took the crown from off the head of the proud Pharaoh, and did manifold signs and wonders in his land. I led forth thy people, and parted the sea: And I have made known thy will unto the sons of man. I dwelt beneath the throne of thy glory: My hut was under the pillar of fire, and I have spoken with thee face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend.

And is not all this enough for me? Receive me, therefore; for now I come to thee."

The breath of the Most High touched the lips of Moses, whose soul departed in the touch. So Moses died at the mouth of God, who himself buried him; and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

(To be continued.)

IV. ON HEBREW SYNONYMES.

(Continued from Vol. i. page 317.)

אור, נגה

אור in its primitive sense is rendered "light;" and נגה, as cognate with זוהר, "brilliancy, splendour, or shining light." The learned Wessely* defines these nouns more distinctly: אור, he says, signifies that glorious luminary, the sun, which the Creator has placed in the firmament of heaven, להאיר על הארץ, "to give light to the earth." (Gen. i. 17;) that splendid body which received its light from the benign hand of the Almighty, and whose light is not borrowed, but primitive, unlike the moon or stars, whose lights are borrowed. Thus אור, by itself, signifies the sun only, unless אור is followed by the word לבנה or ככב: Then it signifies "moon or star light." Isaiah says, "And the light of the sun shall be אור הלבנה." (Isaiah xxx. 26.) Again: ככבי השמים לא יחלו אורם, "the stars of the heavens shall not give them their light." (Isaiah xxv. 10.) Candle-light is also called אור when followed by נר, and is then called אור הנר. (Jer. xxv. 10.) Job, alluding to the glorious light of the sun, says, אש אראה אור כי יחל, "I shall see אור, light, when it shall shine." (Job xxxi. 36.) When speaking of the eclipse of the sun, he says, על כפיו כסה אור, "With his hands (or power) he covereth the light." (Job xxxvi. 32.) This appears evident by the context: ויצו עליו כספני, properly rendered in our version, "And he forbids it to shine by that which cometh betwixt." (Job xxxvi. 32.)

נגה, on the other hand, expresses such luminous bodies as receive their lights from the sun; such as the moon and stars. The prophet Isaiah, when speaking of the glories of after-times, says, "The sun shall no longer be to you, לאור יומם, as light by day; ולנגה הירח לא יאיר לך, neither shall the brightness of the moon give light unto thee." (Isaiah lx. 19.) The spirit of this prophecy seems to be, that, in those glorious times, the moon, which hath heretofore received its light from the sun will not be wanted, for the Lord will be לאור עולם, "an everlasting light." The prophet Joel says, וככביו אספו נגהם, "The stars shall withdraw their (borrowed) light." (Joel ii. 10.) Habakkuk expresses it still more clearly. Alluding, perhaps, to the miracle in Joshua's time, he says, שמש וירח עמד ובלה, "The sun and the moon stood still in their habitation." He then explains this phenomenon thus: לאור, (that is, the sun,) חציק יהלכו, "thy arrows went; לנגה, at the shining light, (the moon,) ברק חניתך, thy glittering spear." (Habak. iii. 18.) אור when followed by בקר, denotes twilight; that refraction of light which we see, piercing through the clouds before sunrise or after sunset:

As בקר אור, “As soon as the morning was light.” (Gen. xliv. 3.) Saul said, “Let us go after the Philistines, and spoil them, עד אור בקר, until the morning light;” (that is, “twilight.”) אור alone would express only the time when the sun is in the horizon; but, with בקר, it expresses the time when the sun is only visible through the clouds, as aforesaid.

This critical definition of our learned author will elucidate many obscure passages of Scripture, and most particularly that difficult verse in the prayer of Habakkuk, who, in the same spirit of the prophet Isaiah before quoted, when speaking of the wonderful changes which will take place in after-times, in the order of nature, says, ונגה באור תהיה קרניים מידו לו. (Habak. iii. 4.) Our common version renders it thus: “His brightness was as the light; he has horns (coming) out of himself.” This translation seems unintelligible; but, according to our author’s position, it is perfectly clear. The prophet says that, in the glorious after-times, נגה, which is the moon, באור תהיה, “will be as brilliant as the sun; קרניים מידו לו, her beams or rays will be, מידו, from her own power;” that is, the moon will no longer receive her light from the sun beams, but possess a primitive light of herself.

This critical definition our author carries through all similar passages, where אור and נגה occur in Scripture, and which our limits will not allow us to enumerate here.

M. J.

(To be continued.)

V. EPIC POETRY OF THE HEBREWS.

THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

Translated from the שירי תפארת, of Naphtali Hirts Wessely.

(Continued from page 48.)

FIRM as was Moses’ heart, his trust in God
 Immovable; well as he knew that now
 The’ oppressor’s rage, the tyrant’s pride and wrath,
 Would meet their doom, their fearful penalty;
 For God had said, and as He said would do:
 Yet when he saw how terror in each breast,
 How fear and fell despair reign’d paramount
 Through Israel’s camp, his noble mind was mov’d,
 And pity’s tender pain possess’d his soul,
 As to his Rock the man of God did pray:
 “That Jacob’s cruel foes their fated hour
 Approach, full well I know; for thou hast said,
 ‘On Pharaoh, and his host, and chariots all
 I will be honoured!’ Thy word is truth!
 I doubt it not. Yet now in proud array
 Their glittering ranks draw near unto our camp;
 And I did hope that as they came in sight
 Their pride would fall; and, glory be to thee!
 Whilst now, alas! thy sons, in wild affright,
 Faint-hearted, hopeless, cry, ‘No help is near:’
 Despair, the fear of death robs them of life!
 Behind them Pharaoh’s hosts press on their ranks;
 In front the sea; its foaming billows toss

The mighty ship, that ploughs its trackless path.
 To their right hand, Mizraim's hostile fields,
 And to their left; no outlet they espy:
 And even Thou, whose arm in every need
 Hath shielded them; whose word, their only trust,
 Now seem'st to stand afar. Thou tell'st me not
 What, in this hour of utmost need, to do.
 What, to thy people, I shall say; what hope,
 What consolation offer to their souls."

Thus Moses pray'd. The' All-merciful on high
 Heard his appeal, and to reply vouchsafed:

"Why callest thou on me? My aid in time of need
 Is promis'd thee. The tribes my care; I with them am!
 To thee my hidden counsels will I now unfold,
 Thy mind illumine, and expand thy faithful heart,
 That to thy brethren comfort thou mayst now convey.
 Then haste to them, make known what I to thee impart.
 Terror and grief shall cease, affliction yield to joy,
 Vanish their pallid fear, by joyous hope expell'd.
 Unto thy people say, 'The tyrant's might and pow'r
 In boastful pomp he mad displays: Vain are his threats.
 His formidable host cannot 'gainst me prevail;
 For it is I, not you, who combat Mizraim's king.
 From your expos'd encampments fearlessly advance;
 Ye shall not southward march nor north; but to the east
 Proceed, where the Red Sea before you wide expands.
 Fear not its foaming waves; undaunted onward move:
 With you I am: The sea shall open to your ranks.
 For, when the tribes have reach'd the utmost brink of land,
 Then at their head do thou go forth, thy staff uplift,
 Towards the sea thine hand stretch out; its waters all
 Sudden shall part, and yield a beaten path for you.
 Through the parted waves joyous the tribes advance:
 In bonds of love I lead; me they gladly follow:
 Soon shall they wonders see till now unheard;
 When the firm sea their steps supports; when on they walk,
 As if a vale beneath their feet its verdure spread;
 Then shall they see and own that thou my servant art,
 With thee my might; my glorious arm hath led thee on
 By thy right hand; that I their safeguard am, and thine.
 My wonders in the sea my foes shall not behold:
 Round them shall darkness spread: Their hearts I harden still,
 Till horse and riders, foot and lofty chariots, all
 Madly in blind pursuit at once shall headlong rush.
 They too shall tread the sea, shall think they walk on land:
 Then will I honour gain; my name shall glorious be!

When Pharaoh and his host beneath the raging floods
 Of the Red Sea are sunk ; his chariots nor his train,
 His chieftains nor himself, their punishment escape ;
 Then will I honour'd be. The millions now who dwell
 In Mizraim's crowded towns, or on its fertile plains,
 To my great name will bow, and know I am the Lord,
 I am the mighty God, the King of Glory I ;
 While those who hate me, who my majesty condemn,
 Hurl'd to the gates of death, perish in that abyss.
 For this have I disdain'd their king's blasphemous pride
 To punish yet ; 'midst all my signs and mighty deeds,
 Him, and his counsellors who urg'd his cruelty,
 I still preserv'd unharm'd, that now, their measure full,
 They sink and perish all : A fearful prodigy !
 When, nature's laws, confus'd, inverted in their course,
 Aloud proclaim the Lord, and teach the coming race
 Of all who dwell on earth, that those who me despise
 Tread justice under foot, trample on virtue's laws,
 And own no rule save their unbridled furious will,
 Have but an hour's short sway. When justice claims its due
 They meet with their reward, perdition is their doom !"

Tidings like these, by the Most High reveal'd,
 Fill'd Moses' soul with joy and gratitude.
 Gladly he turns to his desponding friends,
 " My people, hear my words," to them he said ;
 " Your lamentations cease, dismiss your fears,
 For all this mighty host, which now you see,
 Chariots and horse, and gallant men-at-arms ;
 The king himself, and all his lordly chiefs,
 Your God has in his wrath assembled here
 To meet their punishment. His mighty hand
 Against them is outstretch'd. Not by your arm,
 Nor yet by human hand, are they to fall.
 Be firm, my brethren ! Ye who timid are,
 Be bold ! Behold the mighty aid of God
 Who worketh wondrously. This day He will
 What eye has never seen for you perform.
 For to the ocean's flood, the raging sea,
 Unto its waters and its angry waves,
 The Lord will call : Utter'd his potent word,
 They shall become dry land : As peaceful herds
 Move o'er the verdant plain, and know no fear ;
 So shall ye, 'midst the firm though liquid walls,
 In safety onward move : There in the Lord
 Ye shall rejoice, triumphant o'er your foes :
 For there your tyrant and his murd'rous crew
 Shall fall, and sink, and be for ever lost.

Then up! advance! fear not your ruthless foe :
 For, as your tribes move on, he from your sight
 Will vanish quick ; no more his dread array
 Ye shall behold, nor ever see again
 His hosts ; not one of them with life escapes.
 Those who into the sea your ranks pursue,
 Together sink, and perish 'neath its floods.
 Then hear me, house of Israel, hear. No sword
 Shall, from its scabbard drawn, menace the foe.
 No warlike trumpet shall defiance sound.
 But, silent, mark the wonders of your God.
 The Lord combats for you. Like unto him
 Is none. His is the land, and His the sea.
 Of all that lives, that moves, and that has breath,
 Of every thing that is inanimate,
 He is alike the Lord : Creator He of all."

He spoke, and Israel's tribes silent rejoice.
 He ceas'd, and at his bidding they advance.
 Their hearts reliev'd, no longer timid they
 Or doubting hesitate. Forward they march ;
 Their foes, hot in pursuit, soon disappear.
 Each wond'ring asks, "What is become of them?"
 Pharaoh no more his former slaves perceives ;
 For darkness thick 'twixt Israel and Mizraim,
 The Lord hath spread. The tyrant cannot see
 The' omnipotence of God, whose wond'rous power
 Acts on the sea, lest at the awful sight
 Mizraim's heart grow faint, and, terror-struck,
 They turn around, and fly in wild affright.
 But, with darkness palpable encompass'd,
 The ground they could not quit, until the tribes,
 In close array, had mov'd into the sea ;
 Whilst in the hostile camp none saw or knew
 That Israel's hosts had left their tents and march'd.
 At even-tide the tribes of JAH advance,
 And, ere nightfall, the hindmost of their ranks
 Enter'd into the sea. Their numbers great,—
 Full millions three of women, children, men,
 Of Israelites and those who follow them,
 Together with their flocks and numerous herds,
 Enter'd the sea,—impeded not their march ;
 And ere the silent night assum'd its sway,
 Or sparkling stars illum'd the firmament,
 Far in the deep the Israelites had gone
 Obedient to their God. When Israel mov'd
 From Pi-hachiroth, by Divine command
 The pillar of the cloud did not, as erst,

Move on before to guide them on the way,
 But kept unmov'd its station on the plain.
 The Lord himself his Majesty reveal'd,
 The' expanse of heav'n was with his splendour fill'd,
 Israel's God shone forth above the sea,
 Its deep abyss his brilliancy illum'd,
 The radiance of its glory threw its light
 Wide o'er the earth : All nature hail'd its Lord.
 Before their camp He, like a Hero, mov'd.
 His people saw the goings of their God.
 Upon the mighty sea,—My God ! My King !
 Thy goings in thy holiness they saw !
 All Israel's host beheld the glorious sight,
 His splendour, which no human tongue can paint !
 The meanest handmaid in their happy camp
 Was with his Sacred Spirit fill'd, and saw,
 What kings and saints in vain have long'd to see,
 The excellence of God to them display'd.
 The joys of heaven were in their hearts infus'd :
 Triumphant they beheld their faithful chief,
 Moses, the man of God, who, staff in hand,
 March'd at their head, the messenger of JAH.
 Him follow they, the Lord through him redeem'd :
 The Lord above, with heavenly myriads bright,
 Appears. His glorious arm does lead them on ;
 And, as their foremost ranks approach the sea,
 When Moses o'er the foaming surge did stretch
 His hand and staff, sudden a new-made path
 Their eyes beheld, a path Omnipotence
 Had for his saints trac'd out in the deep sea,
 That safely they may pass. For into parts
 He did divide the sea. 'Tis he, the Lord,
 Creator he, whom every thing obeys.
 The mighty waters stood like solid stones,
 Unto their right and left along their path,
 Pil'd up in liquid walls, lofty and strong.
 Twelve thousand in a rank they march abreast ;
 Full sixteen thousand cubits wide their path.
 Its length to forty thousand did extend,
 From Pi-hachiroth, where their march began
 Into the sea, to where they reach the shore
 At Shur, where in the wilderness they land.

When, on the waters, the dread majesty
 Of the Most High in splendour was reveal'd,
 The angel of the Lord, who, on their march,
 Each day led Israel's van, withdrew before
 His glory who in holiness is rob'd :

The pillar of the cloud, their constant guide,
 Likewise withdrew, and staid behind their ranks,
 To part their camp from Mizraim's hostile bands.
 Where was the cloud, there dense obscurity,
 And darkness thick, were spread. Their force combin'd
 Surrounded Pharaoh's camp. The murky veil
 Hid Israel's march, until their rearmost ranks
 Had reach'd the sea. The watchful scouts, advanc'd,
 Can bring no tidings unto Mizraim's king,
 That those whom they pursue they cannot reach ;
 That on the sea God's wondrous deeds were wrought.
 Darkness from them conceal'd. They knew it not,
 Until some thousand cubits in the sea
 The tribes had march'd ; then, through the darkness dense,
 The Lord sent forth a light. One ray illum'd
 The fated path his foes were doom'd to take,
 When, in the height of arrogance and wrath,
 Mad they pursue, rush on into the sea.
 Yet all around them still was dark and drear ;
 Obscurity still reign'd between the camps.
 All night they march, but Israel cannot see,
 Nor yet perceive, that, on their right and left,
 Their path is flank'd by lofty liquid walls.
 Until the morning dawn'd, those they pursue
 They did not see : But, then, amaz'd, behold
 The wondrous work of God, his might and power.
 For, like a man who in his garden walks,
 Midst rows of blooming trees, whose fragrance cheers
 His heart, while nature all around him smiles ;
 So, cheerful and serene, walk'd through the solid sea
 Israel's tribes, and praises gave to God.
 Not thus feel Mizraim's hosts ; for, against them,
 Superior powers array'd, in contest join'd.
 The mighty pillars of the deep did shake ;
 The earth did tremble to its central point ;
 All nature's terrors came : Summon'd they were
 Vengeance to do upon the foes of God.
 The tyrant sees, his bands astounded see.
 The might, the wrath of God, they trembling own,
 Whilst Jacob's sons the glorious wonders hail,
 And joy angelic triumphs in each breast.

My brethren, listen to my lay ! give ear,
 While I relate what God for us hath done ;
 And while I sing his mercy and his power,
 Proclaim aloud your thanks. All nations call
 To join with you, and praise His glorious name.

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VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHITALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 52.)

R. DOSA the son of Harchinas said, "Sleep in the morning, wine in the forenoon, childish conversation, and frequenting the assemblies of the worldly-minded, drive a man out of the world." (III. 14.)

COMMENTARY. *Sleep in the morning, &c.*—It is a fact, founded in nature, and confirmed by experience and the close investigation of the profoundest observers, that at no time during the twenty-four hours which compose day and night, are man's intellects so composed, his ideas so clear, and his mental and bodily faculties so vigorous, as when, after a refreshing sleep, he awakes in the morning, and prepares to meet the duties of the coming day. Nor is it man alone whose powers are renovated by the balm of repose, and the genial influence of returning day. What spring is to the annual, morning is to the diurnal, division of time. The dews of heaven refresh the earth; the breeze of morn agitates the branches of the lofty tree; flower and shrub, blossom and herb, as they drink in the pearly dew-drop, expand their fragrance afar. The jaded horse, the tired ox, arouse themselves fresh as though the preceding day had not witnessed their toil. The drowsy tinkling that marked the heavy steps of the returning herds is altered into a brisk and cheerful tune, as the skipping lamb gambols round its dam, and the stately bell-wether leads forth the frisking flock. On every bough, from every tree, in the field as in the forest, in the village as in the city, nature's choristers send forth their untaught melodies, and rejoice at the return of light. The moping owl, the lucifer bat, the ferocious

beasts, who all night long have prowled about in search of prey, fly at the approach of dawn, and hide their noxious presence from the cheerful ray of the sun. Thus the genial influence of morning extends to the whole of terrestrial nature: But of all that exists on earth there is no being in creation to whom the renovating power of morning is so salutary, so fraught with every good, and, therefore, so precious as to man. It affects alike his corporeal and his intellectual nature. In every station of social life, to the most wealthy as to the most indigent, to him who enjoys all the luxuries of life, free from every exertion, as to him whose daily toil produces his scanty pittance of daily bread, morning is pre-eminently the time of mental suavity, and of corporeal comfort. At no time, during the twenty-four hours, is his mind so serene, as when first he opens his eye to salute the radiance of the rising sun, ere the cares of the coming day weigh heavily on the elasticity of his spirits, and the troubles and bitterness of his avocations disturb the composure of his soul. At no time does his corporeal frame feel so vigorous as when balmy sleep departs from his opening eye, and before the fatigues of body and mind have spread the pressure of lassitude and weariness over his limbs. Therefore, the best and wisest of men have devoted the morning to their meditations on the Divine

mercy, and reflections on their own duties. Thus we find it recorded of Abraham, "That he arose early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord." (Genesis xix. 27.) And our Rabbies (of blessed memory) instruct us, that the morning prayer, which it is the duty of every Israelite to offer to his Creator, was instituted by this first and greatest of the Patriarchs. Thus, likewise, we find the royal psalmist hail the approach of morning, and exclaiming, "Awake, my glory! awake, harp and psalter! I will awake the morning." (Psalm lvii. 8.) And when the Deity, at the urgent request of Moses, graciously promised, that he would make known to him those His glorious attributes by which the universe is governed, the Divine directions were, "Be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount, &c. And Moses rose up early in the morning and went up unto Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him," &c. (Exodus xxxiv. 2, 4.) Many other instances might be adduced from the records of Holy Writ to prove, that morning is the time most appropriate to present our orisons to the Most High; and, accordingly, our Rabbies, in the Talmud, (treatise *Berachoth*, folio 1,) fix the time for pronouncing the *Keriath-Shmang** in the evening, after the turmoil of the day has ceased, and in the morning before that turmoil has commenced.

But it is not for spiritual contemplation and prayer only that morning is the most appropriate season, but for worldly affairs and occupations likewise. Of whatever nature a man's usual avocations may be, he will find the hours of morning those in which he is best able to perform the duties of his calling. Are his pursuits such as require mental exertion, study, and reflection? What time more befitting than morning, when all the energies of his mind are at their fullest height and clearness, and all the faculties of his soul refreshed and

free from lassitude? If they are such as to require bodily exertion, toil, and manual labour, when can he expect to perform his work more quickly, and with greater ease to himself, than in the morning, when the repose of a night has refreshed his weary limbs, recruited his failing strength, and renovated or restored to their pristine force all the faculties of his body, the power and energy of his muscles, and the acuteness of his senses? Thus, with whatever view we contemplate the importance of the morning, in respect to spiritual as well as temporal duties, to intellectual as well as corporeal occupations, we find, that of all the hours of the day none equal those which are cheered by the rays of the rising sun.

But if such is the importance, utility, and benign influence of the morning, what shall be said to him who, locked in slothful sleep, abuses nature's choicest restorative, and wastes not only a part, but the most valuable part, of that precious material of which life is composed—time? Well is his state described by Solomon, who calls out to him, "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; then will thy poverty come as a traveller, and thy want as an armed man." (Proverbs vi. 9—11.)

Nor is it poverty only with which he is threatened. That idleness is the parent of every vice, is a truth confessed in all ages; nor need he who indulges and nourishes the parent feel surprised if its pernicious offspring invade his mind, spread their pestilential venom through his whole being, and poison both body and soul. Nor let him who, dawn after dawn, the glorious sun sees sunk on his bed, inanimate and insensible to the radiance of its presence; let him not plead the multiplicity of his avocations, and the late hours he is obliged to keep, as an excuse for his perverting the order of nature, by turning night into day, and day into night. To him the prophet says, "Woe unto those who put darkness for light, and light for darkness."

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. i, page 13.

(Isaiah v. 20.) Such is the fearful denunciation of Holy Writ; while our teacher tells him, "Thy sloth, thy sleep in the morning will drive thee out of the world." The fairest portion of thy life-time is wasted; that which is most useful is left altogether unused; and, when the day of reckoning comes, thou wilt stand aghast at the fearful sum total of duties neglected, good actions left unperformed, through this slothful habit. And come the day of reckoning will, and to thee quicker than to others. For that portion of a man's existence only merits the name of "life" which he has usefully employed and devoted to his duties. Whilst he, whose slothful slumber does not permit him to behold the most splendid spectacle in nature—the rising of the glorious orb of day; who never hails or enjoys the balmy freshness of the morning, and the radiance of renovated creation, robs himself of a portion of his own existence, and shortens that which alone ought to be called his life-time and existence in this world,—the period of his salutary activity and useful discharge of his duties, according to the station Providence has assigned to him: Therefore, remember the counsel of the wise monarch: "In the morning sow thy seed." (Ecclesiastes xi. 6.) And know that every hour of thy time which is wasted shortens thy real life-time, and drives thee out of the world.

Wine in the forenoon.—Our wise teacher here does not allude to those, whose health may require that they should enjoy a small quantity of wine in the forenoon; or to those whose strenuous and fatiguing labours may require that a restorative should be administered to their failing powers; but to him who, setting aside and neglecting those nobler pursuits which might conduce to his welfare here or hereafter, and promote the happiness of his fellow-men;—abandons himself to potations of wine which inflame his brain, lay prostrate his reason and senses, and reduce him below the level of the brute creation. All that has been said to him who wastes his existence in idleness and

sloth may likewise be applied to the drunkard: But how infinitely greater is the reproach that attaches to the latter! How dire is the denunciation of him who in Holy Writ is held up as the proto-type, the climax, of every vice! As it is written, "Lest there be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God. Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, *increasing thirst through drunkenness.*" (Deut. xxix. 18, 19.) Here we see that Moses, intent to impress on the minds of the Israelites the picture of a man abandoned to every vice, who has turned from his God, and hugs himself in the enjoyment of his criminal propensities, cannot sum up the delineation more effectually or concisely than by introducing as his climax—drunkenness! Indeed this vice, the bane of reason, and destroyer of human dignity, not only sinks its victim below the level of humanity, but renders him inferior even to the worst of animals. For, though every other vice degrades humanity, it may find its kindred instinct among the brutes. Thus, cruelty claims affinity with the tiger; treachery with the cat; concupiscence with the goat; obstinacy with the mule; cowardice with the hare; gluttony with the hog; with many other instances of similarity between the vices of man and the evil propensities of beasts: But the drunkard stands alone in created nature. Excluded from the pale of humanity, he has not even the melancholy satisfaction of knowing, that the brutes will admit his claim of kindred, or that, amongst them all, one can be found who, like him, is guilty of an outrage against its own nature. When the tiger slaughters entire flocks, and drinks their blood to slake his unquenchable thirst, and cool the burning heat which preys upon his intestines, he may plead as his excuse the conformation and instinct of his nature; but when man, lost to every recollection or feeling

of his dignity, sits himself down to swallow glass after glass, and bottle after bottle, of the intoxicating draught, which destroys his reason, blots out every trace of manhood, even to the firm and erect carriage of his body, and reduces him to be an object so disgusting, so loathsome, so pitiable, that, throughout the terrestrial creation, we seek in vain any being so utterly degraded, except indeed it be another drunkard like himself;—when man does this, what can he plead in his defence? Not his natural conformation; for his frame loathes the excess to which he subjects it, and eventually refuses its office to the heinous abuse which he makes of its faculties. Nor yet his instinct; for man's instinct is reason; and were it possible that this gift of the Most High could behold itself in the corporeal frame it inhabits, when that frame is under the pestilent influence of inebriety; could it see itself, it would for ever fly its turbid seat, and make room for moody madness. Well, therefore, may our teacher tell us, "Beware of abusing the goodness of your God, by an undue indulgence in the juice of the grape. It will drive you out of the world; even while yet alive, you are dead; exhibiting death in its most hideous and loathsome features. Beware how ye suffer this lowest of vices to gain on you; even that which in itself may appear harmless, a forenoon-draught, will eventually become pernicious to you; it will grow on you as a habit, increasing and becoming more firmly rooted with every day's indulgence, until you are overwhelmed by its intensity and irresistible force. Do not therefore yield to the first assaults of temptation; but keep in mind the fearful denunciation of the prophet: 'Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; and continue till night, and the wine inflames them! The harp and the viol, the tabret and the pipe, and wine, are at their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their

pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.'" (Isaiah v. 11, 12, 14.)

Childish conversation and frequenting assemblies, &c.—By the words, "childish conversation," our teacher means every vain, idle, puerile, and useless pursuit, which tends not to the welfare and happiness of man and his fellowmen, either here or hereafter. For, as we said before, that portion of man's existence only merits the name of life, which he has usefully employed and devoted to his duties: So likewise no part of a man's avocations merits the name of useful occupations, or manly pursuits, except those undertakings which are really conducive to promote the true welfare of himself and others; to second the beneficent intentions of the Creator, and to act up to the purpose for which alone man was created. If we submit our actions and occupations to this, the only true standard, how shocked shall we be to find that very many of those pursuits which engross our most serious attention and unremitting exertions, deserve no better name than childish or puerile conversations! Accordingly our teacher cautions us against abandoning ourselves to occupations which, when brought to the test, will not be found worthy of our time and care. He says, "When the mad call of ambition resounds in thine ears; when the vain tinsel of outward distinction is glittering before thine eyes, and vanity urges thee to follow the phantoms which her magic wand is raising in thy sight, remember my maxim, that 'childish conversation will drive thee out of the world.' When riches spread their allurements before thee, when the brightness of the gold dazzles thy mind, and the loud cry of avarice and egotism invites thee to worship, and calls to thee, as erst to thy fathers in the desert, 'These are thy gods, O Israel;' (Exod. xxxii. 4;) remember this my maxim, and keep thy soul pure from their contaminating influence: For neither honour nor wealth is other than the puerile toys of a vitiated mind, unless the purposes to which they are applied ennoble their nature. When the allurements of pleasure, the cravings of thy sensual appetites,

and silly trifling, which is dignified with the name of harmless recreation, endeavour to obtain sway over thy mind; when time, instead of being precious, becomes burthensome, and thou strivest to waste, instead of to husband it; when listlessness, the constant attendant of gratified indulgence, and satiety, prompt thee to quit thy home, and, in order to escape the reproaches of thy better feelings, to mix in the frivolous assemblies of the worldly minded; remember, there is a real penalty attached to thy imaginary enjoyments; remember, they drive thee out of the world, for they shorten that space of thy duration which alone deserves to be dignified with the name of life." Accordingly, we find that the sacred singer contrasts

the inferiority of those whose time and pursuits are directed by sinful and puerile inclinations, with those whose time and pursuits are devoted to the performance of their duties, when he says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away." (Psalm i. 1—4.)

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Concluded from page 55.)

CHAPTER IV.

RESPECTING the supposed influence of the planetary aspects on the fate of man, and their effectual power to predestine him to certain actions, adventures, and vicissitudes, we shall not fully enter into the subject, but simply ask, One man builds a ship; hundreds of men embark upon that ship; they are different in age, born in all the seasons of the year, under the varying influence of all the planets respectively, which rule the hours of day and night; their actions throughout their life-time have differed;—some have been prosperous, some unfortunate; some rich, some poor;—the purposes which have induced them to embark on this ship, have been various. The ship, however, founders at sea, and all on board of her perish. The horoscopes of all these men cannot have been alike, or prognosticating the same end: For, as we said before, the hours and seasons of their birth were so different, that different planets must respectively have ruled the ascendant; yet how comes it that they are all involved in one common fate? The same question may be

asked when thousands are engulfed by an earthquake, or by the eruption of a volcano.—Should it be said, that the cases we have put are not parallel; that the vessel is subject to the individual horoscope of the master of the vessel, who, through adverse planets, was at his birth predestined to be drowned, while earthquakes or volcanoes, and similar general calamities are judgments from the Almighty, whose general operation suspends the influence of the planets over the lives and fortunes of the individual:—Should this be said, we again ask, How come it that the horoscope of the ship-master, and the fate to which it predestines him and his vessel, should sway that of the hundred men whose previous fortunes, the hour and season of their birth, and the aspect and conjunctions of whose planets have nothing in common with those of this fated ship-master? And why do the prognostications of all their horoscopes become annulled, and give way to that only of the ship-master? To questions like these the astrologer is not able to give any satisfactory reply; as they render it evident, the stars do not exercise

any certain and unalterable influence on the fate and conduct of man, so as to foredoom him to certain actions, and predestine him to certain consequences of those actions, which he has it not in his power by any means to avoid and escape; but that on the contrary, their influence, if the stars really do possess any influence whatever, is variable, uncertain, and subject to be swayed and altered by various causes; such as, the will of man, or intercession, &c. Accordingly, our Rabbies declare, in the Talmud, (treatise *Sabbath*, folio 109,) "The Israelites are not subject to fate or planetary influence;" which Rashi * explains by saying, that the free-will of man, his adherence to the laws of God, and obedience to the will of his Creator, supersede fatality and astral influences. So likewise says the prophet: "Learn not the ways of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, as the heathens are dismayed at them." (Jer. x. 2.) His meaning is, that, as the law of God has been communicated to you; as you are responsible for your obedience or disobedience, and are rewarded and punished accordingly; it is certain that you cannot be subject to the controlling power of the planets, or to their unavoidable influence on your actions or conduct: For, in order to entitle you to punishment or reward, whatever you do or leave undone must be the result of your own free-will. Therefore, ye need not be dismayed at the signs of the heavens as the heathens are, who, not having the law of God revealed to them, are not certain whether their actions are the result of free-will or of planetary fatality and predestination; and who, therefore, are afraid of the signs of the heavens.

From all this we see, that, although it may sometimes happen that the prognostications of an astrologer, founded on the aspects of the planets and conjunction of the heavenly luminaries, may prove true, yet such

* R. Salomon ben Isaac, Jarchi, born at Troyes in Champagne, in the twelfth century, resided at Luues in Aquitaine. He is generally called "the Prince of Commentators," and his expositions on Holy Writ and the Talmud are those most approved of and in general use.

is by no means invariably the case. Nor does it prove, that the stars exercise any unalterable control over man; as the cases in which such prognostications have proved untrue, are far more numerous than those in which they have strictly and literally been fulfilled.

CHAPTER V.

THE influence of man's free-will on his actions is the next subject of our inquiry. We must preface this inquiry by observing, that human actions are supposed to be derived from the following sources; that all are owing, 1. To absolute constraint or predestination; or 2. To absolute freedom of choice or volition; or 3. To the combined influence of predestination and volition on the same action; or 4. That some actions are predestined, while others are voluntary: and some result from the combined influence of predestination and volition. The first opinion, absolute predestination, which is upheld by astrologers, cannot be true, as it entirely destroys that possibility or power of exercising his free-will which is inherent in man from his nature; as is proved by the evidence of the senses and by experience; confirmed by the law of God, all the principles of which would be uprooted, were man not a free-agent. Those who maintain predestination under the impression, that thereby they fully establish the perfection of the Divine knowledge free from all possible change, are mistaken. They say, that as the Deity has himself laid down the rules for the movement and influence of stars and planets, He knows what they bode to man, whose destiny is foredoomed according to their aspect and conjunction. And, as it is impossible that any thing can happen which is not pre-ordained by the combinations of astral influences, the knowledge of the Holy One is thus proved to be unalterable, and therefore perfect and true; for, were it possible that any thing could occur different from that result which must be produced by the planetary influence, according to the rules, the Deity himself has

laid down, his knowledge would be untrue and imperfect, because it is uncertain. They, however, forget that their position is untenable; as there can be no doubt that the knowledge entertained of any event, before it takes place, must be different from the knowledge entertained of the same event after it has taken place. And, if we attempt, in any way, to assimilate the Divine to human knowledge, we find that the relative acquaintance with that which is past, which is present, or which is to come, requires a different knowledge, which undergoes a change corresponding to the state of the thing to be known. But the truth is, that we cannot, in any way, assimilate Divine to human knowledge, or draw any inference from our own nature to His essence.

The second opinion, that our actions depend only on absolute volition, according to the opinion of the speculative philosopher, is likewise incorrect. For the philosopher assumes that there is no control exercised on human actions, and that to *do*, it is but needful man should *will*: Whereas the evidence of the senses and of experience daily proves to us that there is many an action which man labours to accomplish, and to effect which he employs every means that prudence and reason recommend; and yet, not only does he fail in his object, but a result the very reverse of what he contemplated is produced: As, for instance, the brothers of Joseph, who strove to annul his exaltation, of which the dreams he related made them jealous, and which they thought they had fully effected by selling him into slavery for life into a far distant land: And yet the very means they adopted to destroy every possibility of his ever becoming a ruler over them, were instrumental in raising him to that very dignity of which they were envious. So, likewise, Adonijah strove to succeed his father on the throne; and he, therefore, ingratiated himself with the principal officers and servants of his father, and gained them over to his own views: Whereas, these very efforts were the cause of his hopes becoming frustrated, as they aroused the anger of king David his father,

and induced him to proclaim his son Solomon king, and to abandon the government to him during his own life-time. Often again we see, that men, without any effort of their own, attain the summit of their wishes, and even to such success as they never contemplated. Take as an instance Saul, who became king without any effort of his own, and though he entertained no wish, hope, or prospect of attaining to such eminence. All this proves to us, that human actions do not in their results depend on man's volition only. Were we to assume the third opinion, the combined influence of predestination and volition, on all the actions of man, a little reflection will show us, that such an opinion is likewise incorrect: As, where there is any constraint whatever exercised,—as must be the case were predestination to combine with volition; for the former would outweigh the latter,—man cannot be entitled to praise or reward for his good, or to blame and punishment for his evil, actions. Thus is plainly demonstrated the impossibility that *all* human actions should depend either on predestination or on absolute volition, or on the combined influence of both these antagonist principles. It therefore only remains for us to adopt the opinion, that *some* actions are predestined, others voluntary, and some influenced by both principles: But, in order properly to understand this opinion, we must explain its application to the various actions of man. We therefore say: Some human actions are voluntary; namely, those which he undertakes with a fixed purpose and intention, according to the possibility or power of exercising his free-will inherent in his nature. For such actions he is entitled to praise and reward, if they be good, or to blame and punishment, if they be evil. To these actions the commands and prohibitions of the law relate; and for these actions man is accountable and responsible, as the intention with which they are undertaken is free and the offspring of his own will, free from all constraint, forced impulse, or hinderance. Those other actions, which are predestined, are such as, according to

the Divine wisdom and providence, must be performed, and which may be indicated by the astral conjunctions. These relate to the general system; and all man's efforts to avert them are vain, because they do not in any way depend on his own will. Such are, for instance, a man who has determined on taking a journey by a certain road, or embarking on a certain ship, but falls and breaks a limb, or is suddenly taken ill and compelled to renounce his intention; but is in reality preserved from being attacked and slain by robbers or perishing by shipwreck, as befel those who took that road or who embarked on that vessel; so that the fixed intention of his free-will is frustrated by an event over which he has no control, but tending to his own good; or it may tend to his injury; for those who took the journey he intended, and on the same errand, or those who embarked on the ship he purposed going with, and with the same design, may have been prosperous, and made their fortunes: But, for such events man cannot be and is not entitled to praise and reward or liable to blame and punishment. Those actions which are subject to the combined influence of predestination or volition, are such as man undertakes with a fixed purpose and determination, according to his own free-will; but which, in their progress, lead to a result beyond his contemplation or control; as, for instance, he who digs the ground with an intention of planting seed, but who through his digging discovers a hidden treasure. Here the act of digging was the offspring of his own free-will, the finding of the treasure, an event beyond his own contemplation or control; and yet so far dependent on and combined with his own free-will, that, had he not dug, he would not have made the discovery. Such actions are in themselves rewards or punishments, as their result is fortunate or unfortunate; and man becomes responsible only for their consequences, as his own free-will properly or improperly uses the results to which they lead.

As this truth is hidden from the eyes of men,—that while some of

their actions are voluntary and depend only on their own free agency, others are predestined and entirely beyond their control, and others again partly voluntary and partly predestined,—they are misled and erring in their opinions, till some of them think that every action is pre-ordained, others that every action is the result of man's free-will, and others again that all actions are partly pre-ordained and partly voluntary. Nor is it the commonalty of mankind alone, but speculative sages and philosophers also, who have fallen into this error. Thus it appears that Job entertained the opinion, that whatever of good or of evil befel him was pre-ordained by astral influence. Such must have been the impression on his mind when he exclaimed, "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night when it was said, There is a male child conceived. Let the stars of its twilight be darkened," &c. (Job iii. 3, 9.) And, therefore, Eliphaz, in his first reply, says to him, "If evil or good be pre-ordained, then would the virtue of man likewise be of Divine predestination." This is the meaning of his question, Shall mortal man כְּאֱלֹהִים, from God, be righteous? or, כְּמַעֲשֵׂהוּ, from his Maker, shall man be pure? (Job iv. 17.) This he tells him is impossible: For, if such were the case, man would not be entitled to praise, as he could not be otherwise than righteous, and his virtue could never become questionable: Whereas the fact is directly contrary, and therefore, "Behold he puts no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly: How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust!" &c. (Job iv. 18, 19.) If even those whose essence is incorporeal are nevertheless subject to mutation, and not worthy of perfect trust, because they too may be swayed by the impulse of their volition, how much more is that the case with man, who, from the very nature of his corporeal composition, must be subject to change,—with whom mutation of will and purpose is inherent in his very nature, and whose unalterable destiny can therefore not be pre-ordained! As thus a man's

doing right or wrong is not pre-ordained, but results from his own will, it is an unavoidable consequence, that good or ill does befall

him according to his choice, being the natural effects of causes created by his own free and uncontrolled determination.

(To be continued.)

III. TALMUDIC ALLEGORIES.

(Continued from page 58.)

THE SONGS OF THE NIGHT.

As DAVID, in his youthful days, was tending his flocks on Bethlehem's plains, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and his senses were opened, and his understanding enlightened, that he might comprehend the songs of the night. The heavens proclaimed the glory of God; the glittering stars all formed one chorus. Their harmonious melody resounded on earth, and the sweet fulness of their voices vibrated to its uttermost bounds.

"Light is the countenance of the Eternal," sung the setting sun. "I am the hem of His garments," responded the rosy tint of twilight.

The clouds gathered and said, "We are his nocturnal tent;" and the waters in the cloud, and the hollow voice of the thunders, joined in the lofty chorus: "The voice of the Eternal is upon the waters; the God of glory thundereth; the Lord upon many waters."

"He did fly upon my wings," whispered the wind; and the silent air replied, "I am the breath of God, the aspiration of his benign presence."

"We hear the songs of praise," said the parched earth; "all around is praise; I alone am silent and mute!" And the falling dew replied, "I will nourish thee so that thou shalt be refreshed and rejoice, and thy infants shall bloom like the young rose."

"Joyfully we bloom," replied the refreshed meadows. The full ears of corn waved as they sung, "We are the blessing of God; the hosts of God against famine."

"We bless you from above," said the moon; "we bless you," responded the stars; and the grasshopper chirped, "Me too He blesses in the pearly dew-drop."

"He quenched my thirst," said the roe; "and refreshed me," continued the stag; "and grants us our food," said the beasts of the forest; "and clothes my lambs," gratefully sung the sheep.

"He heard me," croaked the raven, "when I was forsaken and alone." "He heard me," said the wild goat of the rocks, "when my time came, and I calved."

And the turtle-dove cooed; and the swallow and all the birds joined their song, "We have found our nests, our houses; we dwell on the altar of the Lord, and sleep under the shadow of his wing in tranquillity and peace."

"And peace," replied the night, and echo prolonged the sound, when chanticleer awoke the dawn and crowed, "Open the portals, the gates of the world! the King of glory approaches: Awake! arise! ye sons of men, give praises and thanks to the Lord; for the King of glory approacheth!"

* * * * *

The sun arose, and David awoke from his melodious rapture. But, as long as he lived, the strains of creation's harmony remained in his soul, and daily he recalled them from the strings of his harp.

THE DAWN.

HAST thou seen the beauteous dawn, the rosy harbinger of day? Its brilliancy proceeds from the apartment of God; a ray of the Imperishable Light, and consolation to man.

* * * * *

As David, pursued by his foes, passed a dreadful night of agony in a dreary cleft of Hermon's rock, he sung the most plaintive of his Psalms: "Lions and tigers roar around me; the assembly of the

wicked have encompassed me ; and no help is near."

When behold the dawn broke : With sparkling eyes the roe of morning sprung forth, moved over hills and plains, and, like a messenger of the Deity, addressed the fugitive on the sterile rock : " Why dost thou complain that no help is near ? I emerge from the obscurity of the night ; and the terrors of darkness must yield before the genial ray of the cheerful light."

His eye continued fixed on the purple hue of the dawn, and he felt consoled : He saw it arise, and become the sun in its splendour, pouring blessing and happiness over the earth. Confidence and hope once more entered his soul ; his plaintive lament became a hymn of joy ; he called it " the roe of the morning,* the song of the rosy dawn "

Often, in after-times, he repeated this Psalm to thank his God for those perils of his younger years which he had overcome ; and, amidst the sorrows of his latter years, that Psalm ever cheered his desponding soul.

* * * * *

Daughter of the Creator, holy dawn, thou who every morning dost look down, and inaugurate heaven and earth, look on me too, and inaugurate my heart, that it may be pure, an altar devoted to thy Maker.

THE ROYAL SINGER.

The royal singer had sung one of

(To be continued.)

his most beautiful Psalms to the glory and praise of Him who had been his help in every need. The last notes still vibrated on the strings of his harp, when Satan stood beside him, and tempted the heart of the king to be proud of his song. " Amongst all thy creatures," he exclaimed, " hast thou, O Lord, one who praises thee more melodiously than I do ? "

Through the open window, before which he had spread his hands in prayer, a grasshopper flew into the king's room, and seated itself on the hem of his robe. She began her clear matin-song ; a number of grasshoppers assembled around her. One nightingale came, and soon numbers of nightingales sang the praises of their Creator.

The ear of the king was opened ; he heard the concert of all animated nature ; the splashing of the brook, the rustling of the woods, the voice of the morning star, the enrapturing song of the rising sun.

Lost in the high harmony of the voices which unceasingly and unweariably sung, the king remained silent : He thought his song excelled even by the grasshoppers which still chirped on the hem of his robe. Humility again entered into his soul ; he took his harp, and gave vent to his feelings, as the musical strings resounded with his admiration. " Praise ye the Lord," he sung, " all ye his creatures. Praise thou likewise the Lord, my inmost heart ! my soul, join humbly in his praise."

IV. EPIC POETRY OF THE HEBREWS.

THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

Translated from the שירי תפארת, of Naphtali Hirts Wessely.

(Concluded from page 64.)

WHEN moved from Israel's camp the pillar'd cloud,
And o'er their foes its sombre veil was spread,

* Psalm xxii : השחר על־אילת :

Enfolding Pharaoh's host in darkness deep ;
When of the tribes the long array had march'd
Towards the beach, and Moses had stretch'd forth
His hand and staff above the heaving sea ;
Then, as a man his garb and dress does change,
The waves their nature changed ; liquid no more.
For o'er the troubled waters of the sea
The God of Glory let his thunders roll :
His voice He utter'd : Hush'd the billows' roar,
Old ocean's floods were sudden rear'd on high ;
On firm foundations from the deep they rose,
And stood like walls erect. A sight like this,
Before or since, ne'er greeted mortal eye.
For as creation's God, when time began,
His wondrous power display'd, and from the' abyss
Of dreary chaos, which his word call'd forth,
His wisdom bade the universe emerge,
And form the heav'ns, the waters, and the land ;
So did for Israel's weal his mighty power
Renew creation's scenes, and bade the sea
To yield a path for those He had redeem'd :
He spoke, and, tier on tier ascending high,
The liquid treasures of the deep arose :
Upright they stood in tow'ring altitude,
And left a way wide, open, clear, and dry,
Which to the right and to the left they flank.
Thus was on either side the sea confined :
Its waters turn'd, nor dared they onward flow ;
Before the Lord they trembling fled. When He
Utter'd the potent words, "Let sea be land!"
The waters of the main were rent in two,
Nor longer able to commix their floods.
For as they backward turn'd, or rose aloft,
Their confluence had ceas'd : Part to the north,
Part to the south, they stand, and own his might.
For in the work of those six wondrous days
In which the God of all created all,
When on the surface of the waters moved
The Spirit of the Lord ; they by his might
Divided were, and from the yawning chasm
Dry land arose,—its rocks, and hills, and plains,—
In beauteous order, as His will devised.
The laws He then laid down He now suspends :
The briny waves He all night long controls.
At His command the ocean owns the Lord.
Become dry land, its waters ceased to flow :

One solid mass above the wide-spread path,
 And one below, the foaming billows form.
 Between the deep Red Sea no more exists :
 Where once it was, a verdant plain extends,
 Bounded by bulwarks strong and battlements
 Aquarious. No disobedient wave
 Presumes to pass the line traced by the Lord.
 His Spirit rules their course, whose might of old
 Confined the sea, its boundaries assign'd,
 And who again commands the trembling floods,—
 “ Thus far shall ye advance, and not beyond ! ”
 All night they were restrain'd ; kept back, they swell'd
 The boundless main, where sails the advent'rous ship.
 Above, below the new-created path,
 Like walls, erect they show their nature changed.
 Beyond, they foam and rage, and toss their spray
 On high, while here like rocks unmoved they stand.

Into a valley as a man descends,
 The tribes march from the beach into the sea,
 A new formation ; from before their steps
 Removed the rocks, the clefts, and caverns deep,
 With which abounds the bosom of the sea.
 Like garden-walks, all smoothen'd is their path.
 No flint impedes their march or wounds their feet.
 The clay and marl, the damp and loamy sand,
 Through which to wade their slow and toilsome course
 The tribes had been compell'd, are all removed.
 Like the soft carpet of a grassy lawn,
 Their path is clear. The lowest, inmost depth
 Of the Red Sea no longer to their sight
 Presents a rude, chaotic mass unform'd ;
 But as when, erst, unto the new-born earth
 The fiat of creation's Lord went forth,—
 “ Let herbs and fruits thy naked plains adorn ! ”
 When vegetation's treasures all, at once,
 Did o'er the varied surface spread their charms :
 E'en so at His behest a meadow rich
 Arose : And where the rising sun had seen
 The briny flood with nought but sea-weed crown'd,
 There did the ev'ning star, surprised, behold
 The herbs and shrubs that clothed the new-form'd path.
 With easy step, and front erect, the tribes,
 Rejoicing, onward move. In every eye
 Beams gratitude, and love, and high delight.
 The liquid walls, illumined with the rays
 Of glorious light that shines above their head,

Stood firm and strong, by the command of God ;
Like marble solid or the pyramids,
Which still defy the gnawing tooth of time.

While from the sinful hosts of Mizraim's king
The light was still withheld, while darkness yet
Before their eyes had spread its dusky film,
They onward mov'd, and march'd into the sea,
Unknown to them the path on which they trod ;
Its awful boundaries they did not see.
Under their feet the herbage green and fresh,
Forbade the thought that midway through the sea
They urge their course ; that here, their sand run out,
Their fated doom draws nigh ; that never hence
They shall escape, but perish in the deep.
Their anger, raging, fierce, inveterate,
Flames higher still, fann'd by the wrath of God.
Their evil deeds, their evil end, alike
Are from their thoughts shut out. Secure they march
Till all the horse of Pharaoh and his train,
Chariot and foot, leaders and men-at-arms,
Pursue the tribes half-way into the sea.
Throughout the night unwearied on they move
In rash pursuit, nor can their victims reach.
But as the dawn approach'd, their wrath and pride,
Their rancour fell and cruel arrogance,
Crush'd in the dust, are never more to rise.
For then the Lord look'd down upon their host :
The pillars of the cloud and of the fire
Their terrors join'd. Dismay spread through the ranks ;
Confus'd, affrighted, trembling, they perceive,
It is the Lord whom to provoke they dar'd ;
That he had here collected all their bands,
Like the full sheaves when carried to the barn.
When to the right they look'd, they stood aghast ;
When to the left, their souls were horror-struck :
Below their feet the ground did trembling rock.
Vain is the tyrant's hope, and vain his trust !
The very earth becomes his enemy ;
The clouds pour'd water down in torrents fierce !
The thunder loud above their heads did roll ;
The hailstones heavy struck like piercing darts ;
The tempest howls ; lightnings illumine the sky ;
The wat'ry walls did shake, mov'd by His wrath
Whom, 'midst the din of elements at war,
All nature knows, and owns His sovereign sway.

The sand on which Mizraim's warriors tread
 Assum'd a burning heat, their chariot wheels
 Sunk in the miry loam. Their panting horse
 With slow and painful pace the chariots drag.
 Then did dismay and terror wild befall
 The haughty monarch and his chieftains proud,
 And all his warlike host. Recall they then
 The cruelties which on a feeble race
 They did inflict ; how heavily their hand
 Had weigh'd on those whose violated rights
 Their pride had trampled on. Therefore the hand
 Of the Most High weighs heavily on them.
 Then did they know, their sinful hearts confess'd,
 The God they had provok'd, they had defied.
 Then strove they to retrace their fearful way.
 Along their lines the plaintive cry arose :—
 "O ! let us turn ! From Israel let us fly !
 Against us the Lord for them does combat,
 As now we see."—Too late is their resolve.
 Little they know, that, caught within the toils,
 The meshes of their own foul snare of wrong,
 The hour of mercy past, destruction's reign
 Begins. The fated hour at length is come
 When justice its due punishment exacts.

The dawn broke forth, as once before it did
 When Sodom and Gomorrah's wicked sons
 Met with the full reward of all their crimes ;
 Their sin like Mizraim's, similar their doom.
 In Sodom, crowds tumultuously assail
 At night the door which shelter'd from their rage
 The righteous few, who shared not in their crimes.
 Their purpose fell is to enslave the free,
 Oppression's yoke to fix on free-born men.
 But, by the fearful hand and power of God
 With blindness struck, erring about the streets
 Their homes they cannot find, no more enjoy
 The fruits their toil and avarice had heap'd :
 For ere the sun, in splendour robed, arose,
 The fiery streams consumed the godless crew.

Such was the crime of Pharaoh's cruel bands,
 Such also was their awful punishment.
 Their purpose fell was to enslave the free,
 Oppression's yoke to fix on free-born men.
 They all night long advance ; in mad pursuit

They onward rush along the sea-girt path ;
 Their homes they ne'er shall reach ; no more enjoy
 The fruits their toil and avarice had heap'd ;
 For, ere the sun, in splendour rob'd, arose,
 The raging streams engulph the godless crew.

As to retrace their faint and trembling steps,
 Their last expiring energies arous'd,
 Pharaoh and all his men prepare to turn,
 The Lord unto his faithful servant spoke :—
 "Stretch forth, once more, thine hand against the sea ;
 Into its pristine state it shall return,
 Its raging floods resume their ancient place,
 And nature's course inverted be no more."
 As Moses rais'd his hand, the easy path
 On which the king, his chieftains, and his men
 Had march'd, on which affrighted now they fly,
 Once more became, what always it had been,
 Chaotic and unform'd. Under their feet
 The verdant plain gave way and disappear'd.
 The rugged, shapeless bottom of the sea
 Astounded they behold : Sudden they sink
 Into the yawning caverns of the deep,
 Or rais'd on crags aloft, whose glassy sides
 Admit of no descent. Some wretches, sunk
 In fearful clefts, essay in vain to rise.
 Others, all frantic and with outspread arms,
 In wild despair spring from the slipp'ry rocks.
 Their flying ranks are broken, none commands.
 Alike the monarch and his meanest slave
 Have but one hope ; and madly rush to gain
 The friendly beach, before their eye outspread.
 But vain are their attempts : The mail-clad chiefs,
 The horse and riders, in the sands absorb'd,
 Like lead descend into the lowest deep.
 They who in pride and wicked blasphemy
 Above the Lord had raised their arrogance,
 Now, buried far below the lowest pit,
 The bottomless abyss, for ever sunk.
 The liquid walls, which raised their tow'ring height
 On either side, no longer upright stand ;
 But suddenly they move, they heave, and bow
 Their lofty heads. At the Divine command
 Nature's suspended laws resume their sway :
 The floods releas'd, from all constraint set free,
 In one fell swoop descend precipitate,

And overwhelm the wretched fugitives.
The horse and rider, chariot, man-at-arms,
The king, his chiefs, the leaders and their bands,
Alike one fate befalls : They perish all ;
The wat'ry grave on them for ever closed.
Not one escap'd of all the mighty host
Who in the sea had urg'd the mad pursuit.
Some few whom fear forbade to join the fight,
Or stragglers who with lazy steps had lagg'd
Behind the host, and enter'd not the sea,
Upon the beach await the coming day ;
The meanest they of all the numerous bands.
Of all the proud array alone preserv'd,
They saw the great and glorious deeds of God.
Returning to their land, they there made known
The vengeance of the Lord. His wonders they,
Trembling, relate, with rev'rence proclaim
His glory and his might. The strange report
At first small credence found. But when from friends,
From nearest, dearest relatives, who had
March'd with the king, no tidings e'er arrive,
The fearful truth told home to ev'ry heart :
Then knew the millions, who in Mizraim dwell,
The Lord is God, glorious in holiness,
That Moses was His trusty messenger,
An holy man, righteous his word and true ;
That Israel's tribes were sacred to the Lord,
Chosen by Him to serve his glorious name.
Remorse assail'd their hearts ; the cruel yoke
On Israel they impos'd, they now repent.
No more 'gainst them as foes did they go forth,
While in the desert Israel's tribes encamp'd ;
Nor yet when with victorious arms, the land,
The promised land they gain, did Mizraim's hosts,
Join or give aid to Canaan's conquer'd sons.
Five hundred years and more they liv'd at peace ;
No hostile swarms from Noph or Zoan's plain
Invade the Holy Land, till Israel's sins,
Rebellion 'gainst the Lord, 'gainst David's house,
Invite the foe, and Shishak, Mizraim's king,
His warlike bands against Judea led.

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I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 69.)

R. ELEAZAR Hamodai said, "He who profaneth that which is sacred, who despiseth the appointed festivals, who putteth his neighbour to shame in public, who breaketh the covenant of our father Abraham, or expoundeth the law contrary to its true sense, although he may be learned in the law, and perform good deeds, yet will he have no share in the world to come." (III. 15.)

COMMENTARY. *R. Eleazar Hamodai said*—After having, in the preceding maxims, pointed out to us the consequence of sloth, excess, and carelessness,—sins that meet with their punishment in this world, through the effects which their indulgence cannot fail to produce,—our teacher next introduces to our consideration a series of offences, the more serious nature of which is menaced with more fatal consequences. There are two distinct classes of offenders: 1. Those who offend because they cannot resist the impetuosity of their passions, and the violence of their desires; which are continually urging them to transgress the law of God: And, though they know that they are doing wrong, and even at times bitterly regret their sinful infatuation, yet they cannot summon fortitude sufficient to cast off the fetters in which vanity, lust, or selfishness, keeps them enthralled. 2. Those who condemn the laws of God, do not believe their Divine origin, and, therefore, think they do no harm in substituting their own evil imaginations for the word of God, and assigning that supremacy and guidance to their vitiated fancy, (which they dignify with the name of reason,) that is really due to the revealed will of God only. There is a wide difference between these two classes;

and the law does, accordingly, distinguish them from each other: For the ordinary punishments of forty stripes, or death, according to either of the four modes of execution decreed by judicial sentence, are all inflicted on those who wantonly have infringed on the Divine laws, but yet are conscious of their guilt. If these offenders confess the justice of their punishment, and submit to the sentence which has been pronounced against them, with penitence and heartfelt contrition, they may hope, that the Divine mercy will be extended even to them; and that the terrestrial penalty inflicted on them may form an expiation for their sins. Thus we find, that Holy Writ, when giving directions respecting the corporeal punishment to be inflicted on an offender, says, "If the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, then the judge shall cause him to lie down and be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, but not exceed; lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee." (Deuteronomy xxv. i.) So that, notwithstanding his offence, and his punishment, he is still our brother; and when once his transgression has been expiated, by his penitently submitting to the

chastisement which the law awards, he resumes his station in society, and ought not to be despised or deemed vile by his neighbours. And of those who by the sentence of the law are put to death, our Rabbies observe, that, if they confess and sincerely repent of their sins, the Divine mercy may be extended to them, so that they lose not their portion in the life to come. But the second class of offenders the law treats very differently: Of them it says, "But the soul which acts," בִּיד רָמָה (with a high hand,) "presumptuously, whether he be a native or a stranger, he vilifies the Lord; that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul, הַכֹּהֵן הַזֶּה, shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him." (Numbers xv. 30, 31.) If we attentively examine this passage, we find, from the particular and emphatic manner in which the offence is pointed out, and the impressive denunciation which proclaims the punishment, that the whole does not relate to any sin of an ordinary nature. First, the deed is said to be committed "with a high hand." This Rashi * and also the English version render "presumptuously." But we do not find this expression used in any other place, although the punishment due to him who offends presumptuously is often mentioned in the law; but then the word invariably used is, יָדוֹן, "presumption," or its derivative verb; but the expression בִּיד רָמָה, "a high hand," is on no other occasion employed to designate the state of mind of an offender. The heinous nature of the offence committed in such a state of mind is placed before our eyes by the repetitions, "He vilifies the Lord," "He has despised the word of the Lord, and has broken his commandment." And the fearful punishment that awaits so signal a crime is indicated by the awful denunciations, "That soul shall be cut off from among his people:" "That soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him."

* R. Salomon Jarchi.

From all these particular expressions used in denouncing this offence, there can be no doubt but it must be most heinous in the eyes of God and man: And this crime is no other than, אַפְקֹרֶסוֹת, "infidelity or atheism." It is called, בִּיד רָמָה, "with a high hand," because it is the offspring of arrogance and pride, which prompts the blinded infidel to set himself up as independent of God and of revelation; although in so doing the fool renounces the most valuable prerogative of humanity; namely, his individual existence, purpose, and responsibility, in the scale of creation. Nor does he even place himself on a level with the brutes, who have no individual purpose, existence, or responsibility, but merely form parts of a whole or species; but he even reduces himself below them in relative importance: For revelation, or the knowledge of God and of His laws, was vouchsafed unto man, because, without that knowledge, he would be less perfect than his fellow-creatures, the beasts of the field, or the reptiles which crawl on earth: These are guided by instinct; their passions require and admit of no restraint; while man has no other instinct than reason, which is so faulty, so powerless, when exposed unaided to the rude shock of passion, that it is only the knowledge of his Maker, and of the line of duty prescribed by the revealed law of God, that can enable a man effectually to resist and overcome the manifold temptations by which he is assailed. Yet this most valuable aid, together with all the splendid prerogatives of humanity, the infidel contemns, misled by the arrogance of his heart, and the pride of his vain and evil imaginations. Holy Writ goes on to tell us, "He vilifies the Lord:" For, when he is taken to task, and asked, "Why dost thou not obey the laws of God?" he answers by some jocose observation, some scurrilous jest, in which he presumes alike to call in question the existence of his God, and the truth of revelation. Therefore, "his soul shall be cut off from among his people." His crime does not carry along with it

that stamp of boldness, which shows vice in its naked and hideous deformity, and enables even the unwary and inexperienced to shun its allurements by recalling to his mind the word and will of his God; but, with the sinuous tortuosity of the serpent, he twists himself into the confidence of the unwary; instils the leprous poison of his foul ideas into their soul; and, while he undermines their faith in that revelation, which enables them triumphantly to overcome the assaults or seductions of sinfulness, he robs them of their only stay and support, until they sink, never more to rise, into the quagmire of atheism, and become what he himself has been to them, a source of venomous infection to whomsoever ventures to have any intercourse with them. And as such is the dangerous tendency of that most pestiferous and foul abortion of a licentious mind, infidelity, who-soever nourishes its loathsome principles in his inmost heart, although no outward deed betrays the bias of his mind, will not escape the punishment of heaven; and, therefore, the expression of Holy Writ is general: *אשר תעשה*, "who acts," without particularizing any act or deed that he may have been guilty of; to denote that whatever he does, under the influence of his atheistical notions, is offensive to heaven, and subjects him to the most dire punishment that the justice of God denounces against offending man. Thus the words, *בִּיד רַחַב*, "with a high hand," denote pride and arrogant security; that, in the height of his infatuation, the atheist does not fear any thing; and the voice of his conscience is so completely blunted, that it no longer reminds him of responsibility here or in a future state. We find the same expression used to denote a state of perfect security when it is said, "And the children of Israel went out (of Egypt) with a high hand," (Exodus xiv. 8,) fearless of any pursuit or impending ill. The word, *יָד*, "hand," is generally used to denote the exercise of some force and power, and, accordingly, in this passage it may apply to the apparent force of sophistical reasoning and argument by which

the infidel endeavours to support his opinions.

Having thus ascertained which is the sin designated by the words "high hand," we next proceed to notice the repetitions in the passage we have quoted, where we find that they more fully explain the nature, extent, and effects of this sin and of its punishment; and why he who offends from pride of heart and atheism, is so awfully singled out and distinguished from him who sins from the overwhelming impulse of passions which he has not the fortitude to resist. Holy Writ tells us, the infidel "hath despised the word of the Lord." He who is hurried on to sin by the impetuosity and force of his desires, believes in the truth of revelation, and admits that its precepts are most salutary, and such as man ought to obey; but that frail and sinful man is unable to resist the force of temptation, and therefore yields to the urgency of his passions and desires, which impel him to transgress the law of God. Whereas the infidel scorns the word of God: He despises it, and holds it up to the contempt of others as the invention and imposture of men no better than himself. Thus he at once rejects all its commandments, and though not in deed, yet in intention, becomes guilty of every crime which the law forbids: For when he rejects the authority of the law, he at the same time denies that the actions which are therein prohibited are really sinful or criminal; and, in so doing, he renders himself deserving of the punishment denounced against each of these sinful actions, because he breaks down the barrier between right and wrong, and thereby becomes, as we said before, guilty in intention, though not in deed. Moreover, he who, yielding to his evil passions, is impelled to sin, has no fixed and settled purpose to offend and set at nought the will of God; and, accordingly, when not under the domination of his desires, he may be careful to avoid sinning, and to obey the will of God, at least in some one respect. Whereas the infidel evinces his firm and settled purpose to defy and set at nought the Divine laws when he denies their

authority; and therefore Scripture says, "He has broken the commandment of the Lord." He may not indeed have broken any particular commandment, and therefore no special commandment is mentioned; but he has declared his readiness to break them all, whenever he may deem it expedient so to do; because in denying their Divine authority, he annuls their force; so that they are no longer peremptory or binding, but depend on his caprice to be altogether thrown aside as worthless whenever any freak of his unprincipled mind may urge him on. Therefore, whether he is under the domination of his passions and desires or not, he is at all times equally disposed to defy his Maker whose revealed will he altogether rejects. Such is not the case with him who sins from impulse and want of fortitude: Therefore, while the latter is punished for such offences as he actually commits, the former incurs every penalty that is attached to the transgressions mentioned in the law of God. The one, although he sins, is still capable of distinguishing good from bad, and yields homage to God and to the Divine laws; the preponderance of his corporeal frailties, and of the evil desires which they engender, and which he is not firm enough to repress, lead him on to sin; but he is not lost to all hope, for God is merciful as well as just; and when the sinner has expiated his crime by submitting to the punishment decreed by the law, and has endeavoured to purify his soul by penitence and sincere contrition, his prayers will ascend, and be heard before the throne of the Most High. But the atheist, who scoffs at the revealed will of his Creator, and even denies his existence, cannot and does not attempt to purify his soul by

penitence, and does not solicit for mercy or pardon in prayers addressed to a Being whose existence he denies. And, therefore, he remains exposed to the terrific denunciation: "He shall be utterly cut off; for his iniquity shall be (or remain) upon him."

The heinous sin of atheism is particularly alluded to by the prophet when he says, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and understanding in their own conceit." (Isaiah v. 20, 21.) The Amalekites, against whom Israel was enjoined to wage a war of extermination, were a nation of infidels; for of them it is said, "They feared not God." (Deuteronomy xxv. 18.) The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were atheists and scoffers; of them we read, that, when Lot exhorted his sons-in-law to leave Sodom because the Lord would destroy the city, "he appeared ridiculous unto them." (Genesis xix. 14.) Pharaoh and his counsellors were atheists in principle; for of them we read, that, when Moses and Aaron appeared before them, and enjoined them in the name of the Lord to permit Israel to depart from Egypt, the reply given was, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord; neither will I let Israel go." (Exodus v. 2.) Those of whom our teacher treats in his present maxims are likewise atheists, who deny the existence of God and the truth of revelation. And he enumerates five offences which stamp the character of the atheist, and which we shall now proceed to examine.

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Concluded from page 73.)

CHAPTER VI.

ATTENTION and diligence (active agency) must form parts of every

human undertaking; this is self-evident, with respect to such actions as are altogether dependent on man's free-will, subject to no external con-

trol or impediment, and which, as no one can deny, must be indebted to the attention and diligence, or active agency, of man for their being at all performed. Such is likewise the case with events which in part emanate from man's free-will, and in part are the offspring of predestination, where the active agency of man must be instrumental to complete the undertaking; as every event which is the result of two influences, requires that both should be exercised: For instance: Corn is produced from the labour of the husbandman and from the effects of sun and rain; and there can be no doubt but the active agency of human labour in ploughing the ground, sowing the seed, &c., is an indispensable requisite, without which sunshine and rain would not grow corn. Thus it is evident, that, in undertakings influenced either wholly or in part by human volition, man's attention and active agency must form integral parts. In actions or events which are the result of predestination or planetary influence, it would appear that man's diligence or active agency, and particularly his attention, cannot form any really integral parts or essential requisites; but even in such actions and events human agency is very often concerned, although man's attention is quiescent, or perhaps hostile to the result its own activity produces. But, when man finds that all his endeavours to attain a certain good, or to avoid a certain evil, are vain, and lead either to no result at all, or to one directly the reverse of what he anticipates, he feels that action to be under the control of a superior influence: For, in the ordinary course of things, and in those undertakings where man's uncontrolled will has free scope, measures calculated with prudence, and pursued with energy, will in most instances lead to the desired result. When, therefore, as we stated before, the result attained is absolutely the reverse of what man proposed to himself, so that his undertakings, instead of producing good, actually produce evil to him, it is a positive proof that such undertaking or action is not under the control of his own free-will, but that

it is under the influence of predestination. When man finds this to be the case, it behoves him seriously to reflect on his own conduct, and investigate the real and inward motives of his actions: As our Rabbies say, "If a man sees that he is unsuccessful in his undertakings, or that misfortune befalls him, let him examine his deeds; as the prophet says, 'Let us search and try our ways;' (Lam. iii. 40;) and, if he finds that he has been actuated by unworthy or sinful motives, let him repent and amend, as the prophet continues, 'And turn again to the Lord.' If, on the contrary, man finds that his endeavours are crowned with that success to which, in the ordinary course of things, they are entitled, let him rejoice in the Lord, and be thankful for his mercies; as the Psalmist says, 'When thou shalt eat (enjoy) the labour of thine hands, thou art happy, and it shall be well with thee.' (Psalm cxviii. 2.) His meaning is, 'Thou art happy in this world, and it shall be well with thee in the next.'" (Talmud, treatise *Berachoth*, folio 5.) We likewise find that the prophet assures the righteous that "they shall not labour in vain, or bring forth for trouble, for they are the seed of the blessed of God, and their productions with them;" (Isai. lxxv. 23;) thereby showing us, that as success in our righteous undertakings is a mark of the Divine approbation, so the want of reasonable success ought to convince us that our motives and intentions require to be examined and amended.

From all that we have here stated, it is evident that attention and diligence, or active agency, are the duty of man in all his undertakings. Accordingly Solomon praises diligence, when he says, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." (Prov. x. 4.) While in the same sentence he reproves sloth and negligence in order to point out to man that it is his duty, in whatever he undertakes, to exert his utmost attention and diligence in order that he may succeed. Our Rabbies, commenting on the words of Holy Writ, "That the Lord thy God may bless thee," (Deut. xiv. 29,) say, "Is man to sit down with his arms folded in his lap, and say—

'God will bless me, although I remain inactive, and contribute nothing to my own success?' No! in order to prevent thy falling into so glaring an error, Holy Writ takes care to complete the sentence with the expressive words, 'In all the work of thine hand which thou doest.' The blessing of God is granted to human diligence, but not to slothful inaction." Thus, likewise, the poet-king instructs us, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." (Psalm cxxvii. 1.) Human diligence is vainly exerted against the will of God; but if it pleaseth the Lord to keep the city, the watchman waketh to a proper purpose; as his watchfulness and human diligence will be crowned by the Divine aid, which without that diligence would not be afforded. And, as we have laid down the axiom, that some actions are subject to man's uncontrolled volition, while others are predestined, and others again result from the combined influence of volition and predestination, we conclude our remarks by saying, that whatever man does or undertakes, he is to consider as subject to his own will only, and therefore to be promoted by all the attention and diligence that he has in his power to bestow, "and the Lord will do that which seemeth him good." (2 Sam. x. 12.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE next subject to which our inquiry is directed, is providence, or the Divine superintendence and cognizance of human actions. It behoves every believer in the Divine laws to receive as an article of his faith, that the Holy One (blessed be He!) does take cognizance of each individual composing the human race, and of every one of his actions, to reward or to punish each man individually and according to his deserts. This is a fundamental principle of the Divine laws, and an axiom which it is impossible to controvert, without impugning the purpose of Divine revelation and legislation. But, though the truth of this axiom is established by reflec-

tion, it nevertheless requires some elucidation. The speculative philosopher asserts that the Divine knowledge does not descend to particulars, and does not take cognizance of individuals or of their actions, in order to reward or to punish; but, we have already proved fully, and in a manner satisfactory to every reasoning mind, that the Divine knowledge does extend to all beings and to all their deeds: The question to which it therefore remains for us to reply is—"Although the Divine knowledge is perfect and does comprise every thing that occurs in the universe, does Providence, or the superintendence of the Deity, likewise extend to all individual beings, and to their separate actions, in order to reward or punish each one according to his deeds; or is His superintending providence only general, as it is to animals, so that He (blessed be He!) has a perfect knowledge, and therefore must be acquainted with every individual being and its separate actions; yet His superintendence is only afforded to them as being parts of a whole, not to reward or to punish them as individuals, but to preserve the species to which they belong?" This question is of long standing, and has, in all ages, exercised the ingenuity of speculative minds.

The principal cause which has induced those who acknowledge the omniscience of the Deity, to question the extension of the Divine providence to individuals and to their actions, is the apparent injustice which, according to their opinion, prevails in the ordinary course of terrestrial affairs, and the fact that we very often see the wicked prosper in all their undertakings, whilst the righteous is overwhelmed by adversity and a prey to continued misfortunes; whence they argue, that, if the Divine superintendence and providence were extended to individuals and their actions, it is as impossible that such glaring injustice could prevail, as that vice should flourish in luxuriant prosperity, while the virtuous is trampled upon, and borne down by the weight of his calamities. This startling fact induced Job to call in question whe-

ther the Deity takes cognizance of individuals and their deeds, and to express his doubts whether there was any distinction made between righteous and wicked individuals, any more than there is between the different individuals composing any race of animals; and he gives utterance to his doubts in saying, "One thing is true; therefore I say, He consumes alike the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly, he laughs at the sufferings of the innocent; the earth is given to the wicked, he compels the judges to hide their face; if not where and who is he?" (who judgeth)? (Job ix. 22-24.) His meaning is: There is one reason which prevents my admitting that providence takes cognizance of individuals and their actions, for I see the perfect and the wicked must both die. There is no distinction made between the good and the bad: For we see that pestilence, misfortune, and all the evil accidents of life, befall the righteous as well as the ungodly; that they die suddenly, in distress and affliction, contemned and scorned by the prosperous; while, on the contrary, the wicked succeeds in his enterprises, amasses wealth, and gains influence, until it seems that the earth is entirely abandoned to him, so that the judges are (as it were) forced to turn their faces from his iniquities, and not to see evil deeds which they have it not in their power to prevent or to punish. "All this," says Job, "fully proves to me that Divine providence does not descend to individuals of the human species and to their actions, any more than it descends to individuals of the animal species;" and he concludes, by observing, "If this were not so, where and who is the superior power, which, taking cognizance of the affairs of individuals, yet permits so unjust an order of things to subsist?" We also find that prophets, who fully believed that providence superintends the affairs of individuals, and who taught that doctrine to the world, and the sage professors of the Divine laws (their successors) join in uttering their complaints at the fact that the righteous should be unfortunate

while the impious prospers. But though they equally complain of the one and the other circumstance, yet, if we calmly examine, we find that the cause of complaint in the one instance is infinitely stronger than in the other. The fact that the wicked should at all prosper, is most startling and difficult to explain: For all mankind behold his impiety, his arrogance, and pride: His injustice, his violence, and oppressions, and his defiance of the laws and fear of God, are notorious to all. Nevertheless his undertakings are all prosperous, and in whatever he does he succeeds. Therefore men are brought to question providence, and to exclaim with the prophet, "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" (Jeremiah xii. i.)

The fact that the righteous should suffer adversity is not equally startling, and does not exercise the same influence on the minds of men, as the injustice of his sufferings is not equally apparent to the generality of mankind. For all know that there is no one so righteous on earth, that he should always do good and never sin in a greater or less degree. If therefore misfortunes befall the righteous, it does not surprise mankind in the same degree as if the wicked prosper; as, in the former case, the inference generally drawn is,—He must have committed some secret transgression, where no eye save that of the Omniscient saw him; and he who profanes the holy name of God in secret is punished in public; or, perhaps, he has harboured sinful thoughts, for which he now is punished: for no man is exempt from sinful thoughts: (as our Rabbies say, "He that says to a woman, 'thou art betrothed unto me on condition that I am רשע, wicked!' although his piety may be as well known and established as that of Rabbi Akivah, the contract of espousals is legal; as he may have, and probably has, harboured wicked thoughts:") And therefore men are not able to decide who really is righteous: As they who only see the outward acts and appearances may deem a man righteous, while God

seeth the heart, and its inmost workings and desires, knows that he is wicked. We also learn that the importance of these circumstances is very unequal, from the expressions of the *tanaim*,* in מסכת אבות, "the Ethics of the Fathers." (*Pera-kim* iv. 19.) "R. Janai said, It is not in our power to explain the prosperity of the wicked, and not even the sufferings of the righteous." He does not assimilate the two facts by saying וְלֹא, "nor the sufferings," &c., but uses the words לֹא הָיָה, "not even," with the intention to impress on our minds that the difficulty is infinitely greater to explain the prosperity of the wicked, whose impious conduct is notorious, than to explain the adversity of the apparently righteous, whose piety may be but outward and assumed. Therefore this latter complaint can only be founded, in the mouth of him, who, conscious of his own rectitude and the purity of his heart, pours forth his prayers to the All-merciful, as the prophet does when he says, "But thou, O Lord, knowest me; thou hast seen me and tried mine heart toward thee." (*Jeremiah* xii. 3.) We likewise find that Job repeatedly appeals to the Omniscient, and calls on Him to witness his innocence. The sin which his three friends committed was, that they considered him as impious and wicked; as they knew not how to meet Job's arguments, or to explain to him how it comes that the righteous should suffer, except as a punishment for sins actually committed. Job, on the contrary, who knew, and could invoke the Divine testimony to affirm, that he was innocent, could not become tranquillized by the arguments which his friends employed to justify the Divine providence, as he knew that the application of the principles which they made to him was untrue and improper. Accordingly, the wrath of Elihu was kindled against his three friends, "because they had found no other answer, but had condemned Job;" (*xxxii.* 12;) meaning, that as they could not otherwise reply to Job than by asserting that sufferings befel the righteous, only as the con-

sequence of their sins, they had declared Job to be wicked, and condemned him accordingly. Therefore the Lord said to Eliphaz, the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends; for ye have not spoken properly of me, as my servant Job." (*Job* xlii. 7.) Because Job maintained that the truly righteous may be visited by adversity and afflictions; and in so doing he spoke properly. But as he could not explain the cause why the fact is such, he fell into the dilemma of either attributing injustice to the Deity, or denying the superintendence of providence over the factions of individuals; and in so doing he did not speak properly, until Elihu convinced him that providence necessarily extends its superintendence to individuals, and takes cognizance of all and every their actions; and also pointed out to him how he had sinned when he repined against the decrees of the Most High, and impugned the justice of the Holy One. Job, convicted of error by the arguments of Elihu, confessed his mistake, and admitted that affliction and misfortune may befall the righteous, although he has committed no sin meriting such punishment; as the Holy One (blessed be He!) puts the righteous to the test whether he actually is a worshipper from love, and whether he will submit to misfortune and afflictions with resignation, and out of pure love for his Creator, without repining and without impugning the justice and attributes of the Deity. In this manner Job had been tried and found wanting: For when he presumed to question the providence and attributes of the Deity, he justified the reproach of Satan: "Doth Job fear God for nought?" (*Job* i. 9:) Meaning that, while the righteous man is in prosperity, no one can decide whether he really is a worshipper from love or not; but the test is, if he, without murmur or repining, submits to the afflictions with which Providence thinks proper to visit him. And, therefore, when the Deity makes known to Job his sin, and says, "Wilt thou disannul my judgments? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous?"

* The sages of the Mishna.

(Job xl. 8.) Job at once confesses his error, and expresses his deep penitence, in the words, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job xlii. 6.)

The whole book of Job is written for the purpose of solving the two difficult questions: Why does the wicked prosper? Why does the righteous suffer? And, as this solution can be found only in the Divine laws, the master of the prophets (Moses, peace be with him!) composed this book as a conversation, in the course of which wise and pious men are intent on removing, in different ways, the doubts to which these questions give rise. We will here concisely state the most forcible

of the arguments they make use of: And, as it is impossible to offer any satisfactory solution to the doubts these two questions may engender, unless we have previously established the superintendence of Providence over individuals and their actions, we will, in the first instance, adduce some of the most pointed proofs which support that doctrine, taken as well from the book of Job, as from other sources. These proofs are three-fold: 1. Those taken from the general state of things; 2. Those taken from the component parts of that state; and 3. Those furnished by reason: To each of these species of proofs we will devote a separate chapter.

(To be continued.)

III. TALMUDIC ALLEGORIES.

(Continued from page 74.)

THE YOUTHFUL SOLOMON.

A BENEFICENT monarch once spoke to his favourite, and said, "Ask a boon of me, and it shall be granted to thee."

And the youthful favourite said within himself, "What shall I demand, that I may not hereafter repent of my request? Honour and distinction I already possess; gold and silver are the meanest, as they are the most faithless, gifts of fortune; these are not worthy of being demanded: No! I will pray that the king's daughter be granted to me; for she loves me as I love her, and in her I receive perfect happiness. This request will also secure to me the affection of my illustrious benefactor, who thus becomes my father."

And the favourite uttered his request, and it was granted.

* * * * *

When the Lord first appeared to the youthful Solomon, in a vision of the night, He said unto him, "Ask what I shall give thee."

And behold the youth prayed not for silver or gold, for honour, fame, or long life. His prayer was, "Grant me wisdom;" and with her, the daughter of the Most High, he

received every felicity for which he could have prayed.

To her he dedicated his most beautiful songs: Her he recommended to the sons of men as the only true source of happiness. As long as he continued faithful to her, he rejoiced in the blessing of God, in the love and admiration of men. And it is only through her that his fame survives, and has been preserved from oblivion.

THE AGED SOLOMON.

LUXURY, riches, and ambition perverted the ripened manhood of Solomon: He forgot wisdom, the pride of his youth, and his heart became lost in the vortex of frivolous dissipation and wicked folly.

Once as he was walking in his splendid gardens, he heard the conversation of the manifold creatures around him; for he understood the language of beast and of bird, of tree, stone, and shrub: He turned his ear, and he listened.

"Behold," said the lily, "there goes the king; he passes me in his pride, whilst I, in my humility, am robed more splendidly than he."

And the palm-tree waved its

boughs, and said, "There he goes, the oppressor of his country; and yet his vile flatterers, in their fulsome songs, presume to compare him to me. But where are his boughs? where the fruit with which he gladdens the hearts of men?"

He went on, and heard the nightingale sing to her beloved: "As we love each other, Solomon loveth not—O, not one of his sultanas holds him dear as I do thee, my dearest!"

And the turtle-dove cooed to her mate: "Not one of his thousand wives would grieve for his loss, as I would for thine, my only beloved."

The enraged monarch hastened his pace, and he came to the nest where the stork was teaching her young to launch forth on the adventurous flight. "What I do for you," said the stork to its brood, "king Solomon does not do for his son Rehoboam. He does not teach and exhort him: Therefore, the young prince will not thrive. Strangers will lord it over his father's domains."

The king withdrew to his secret closet: Musing, he sat there in silent grief.

As he there sat, sunk in painful reflections, the bride of his youthful years, Wisdom, stood invisible before

him, and touched his eyelids. He fell into a deep sleep, and had a mournful vision. He saw the deputation of the tribes as they stood before his haughty son. He saw his empire divided through the silly answer of the foolish boy. He saw ten of the tribes he had oppressed rebel, and place a stranger on their throne. He saw his palaces in ruins; his gardens rooted up; the city destroyed; the temple of the Lord in ashes. Suddenly he awoke from his sleep, and terror seized on his tremulous mind.

When lo! once more the bride of his youth, the guardian of his early career, stood visibly before him. Tears flowed from her eyes. She spoke: "Thou hast seen what hereafter will happen. Thou alone art the first cause of all these calamities. But it is not in thy power to recal or to alter the past; for thou canst not bid the river to flow back to its springs, nor the years of thy youth to return. Thy soul is wearied, thy heart is exhausted, and I, the forsaken of thy youth, can no more be thy companion in the land of terrestrial life."

With pity in her looks, she vanished; and Solomon, who had crowned his youthful days with roses, wrote in his old age a book on the vanity of all human affairs on earth.

(To be continued.)

IV. COMMENTARIES ON HOLY WRIT.

THE VARIATIONS IN THE DECALOGUE,

Exodus xx. 1-17, and Deuteronomy v. 6-21.

From the ספר בראשית for 1588 (1824) page 88.

IN the second book of Moses, the inspired historian, after having related the wondrous deeds and the mighty power with which the Lord of the universe had interposed on behalf of the oppressed descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and had redeemed them from bondage, continues his narration by informing us, that, in the third month after their miraculous exit from Egypt, the Israelites came to the desert and mountain of Sinai; that there the Lord proposed to them that he

would consecrate them to his service as a nation of priests, an holy and peculiar people, provided "they would obey his voice, and keep his covenant;" that the Israelites cheerfully accepted the proposal; and that, accordingly, after three days' preparatory solemnities, the Lord, in the fulness of his glory, revealed himself unto the assembled myriads of Israel, and made known to them His will, by pronouncing ten commandments, the precise words of which, as they were heard to proceed

from the midst of the glorious and awful apparition, the historian has embodied in his narrative. On a subsequent day, when this historian, who was none other than their leader and chief, Moses, the trusty servant of God, was about to close his earthly career, he thought it proper to remind those who, as children, had accompanied their parents, when they went forth and stood at the foot of the mountain where they beheld the Godhead revealed to mortal eye,—of the sacred covenant which then was entered into, and of the commandments which then were given. Accordingly, he related to them all the minute circumstances which had occurred on that glorious occasion; and also repeated to them the ten commandments: In so doing he mostly adhered to the precise words in which these commandments had been delivered by the Deity; but in some instances he allowed himself variations and amplifications, which, however, in no case interfere with or alter the sense of these commandments, that form the nucleus of the Divine laws; the essence of those duties which man owes to his God, to himself, and to his fellow-men; and the foundation of the whole religious, moral, and social system, essential to the happiness of man here and hereafter.

These variations, which we find in the original narrative (Exodus xx. 1-17) and its repetition, (Deut. v. 6-21,) we are now endeavouring to elucidate; assigning to each the cause which, according to our humble ideas, seems to have influenced the inspired mind of Moses.

THE FIRST VARIATION.

Exodus xx. 4. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, *וְלֹא*, and any likeness," &c.

Deuteronomy v. 8. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, *וְלֹא*, any likeness," &c.

In Deuteronomy the connecting particle *ו* "and" is omitted.* The reason for this omission we may

find in an event which occurred in the interval between the first proclamation of the ten commandments and the subsequent repetition. For, when the Israelites heard at Mount Sinai, that they were not to 'make any graven image, *and* any likeness, &c., some of them took occasion to pervert the true meaning of this commandment, which is the absolute prohibition of all image-worship; instead of which they, by means of a sophistical argument, discovered that the *and* qualified the prohibition. They said, "It is true, that the Lord will not pardon him who adopts any created being as his god, and offers it divine worship. The Lord will likewise punish him who makes unto himself any image, the original of which is not found in creation, but which the fancy of man has engendered,§ and regards that image as a god, and adores it; but the Lord may not feel equally displeased with him who makes the image of any created being actually existing, not with the intention of considering that image as a god, or of worshipping it; for, if such were his intention, he would at once worship the object itself, (as the Egyptians did the ox Apis,) and not substitute an image; but, in order to have it before his eyes as a visible sign or memento of his invisible Father who is in heaven." In making such an image, with such a purpose, they were of opinion, that it might be acceptable to the Lord, and that His presence would consecrate that image in the same manner as subsequently it did the temple erected to His worship. To arrive at this conclusion they interpreted the whole commandment in the following manner: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me, by worshipping any image, the original of which is not found in creation, but is engendered by thine own fancy; (which prohibition is conveyed by the word *פֶּסֶל*, graven image; "and likewise not by worshipping any created being; which is conveyed by the words *וְלֹא תִמּוֹנֶה*, rendered "any likeness." For the word *תִּמּוֹנֶה* does

* This variation is not perceptible in the authorized English version, which renders *וְלֹא* and *כָּל* alike by, "or any."

§ As, for instance, Janus, the image with two faces.

not denote an image or likeness made by human hands, but the actual and natural shape and formation of any material body. And in this sense the word is used by Moses, when he cautions the Israelites not to attempt to produce an image of the Most High, and says, 'Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye did not see כְּמוֹנָה, any manner of shape or form, (*similitude* in the English version,) on the day when the Lord spake unto you," &c. (Deut. iv. 15.) Thus, by restricting the word כְּמוֹנָה to its narrowest signification, and availing themselves of the conjunctive ו "and" to make כְּמוֹנָה and פֶּסֶל two distinct things, they found that the making an image of any created being as a sign or representative of the Deity, was not prohibited; as the general prohibition to have no other gods, &c., was explained by the subsequent part of the commandment to mean worshipping the image of a something which did not exist in created nature, as the statue of Janus, or a being actually existing, as the ox Apis; but that the making an image of any being in actual existence was no where prohibited. Under this impression they made the golden calf, which doubtless they considered, not as God, but as an object fit to recal to their minds the true God: for when they exclaimed, "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt," (Exod. xxxii. 4,) they were not so blinded or stupid as to have forgotten, that, when they went out of Egypt, this calf had no existence, and that the materials of which it was composed were then in the ears of their wives. They therefore only considered it as a sign of the Deity; and intended to substitute it for Moses, who, till then, had been their leader; therefore they called it אֱלֹהֶיךָ, not, "thy gods," but, "thy chiefs, leaders, and superiors;" as was said of Moses: "Behold, I have made thee אֱלֹהִים, (not a God, but,) a superior or leader to Pharaoh:" (Exod. vii. 1 :) For it appears, from the whole narrative, that their concern was for the loss of Moses; as Holy Writ tells us, "And when the people saw that Moses de-

layed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up; make us אֱלֹהִים, chiefs, (or leaders,) which shall go before us; for this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." (Exod. xxxii. 1.) And as, by his absence, they were left without a leader, they determined to substitute in his stead an image, which should at once be exempt from the accidents of humanity and serve as a memento of the Deity. This making of an image to represent a being actually existing was, according to their interpretation, not prohibited in the Decalogue; and that they had no intention to supersede the worship of the Lord, and to introduce idolatry in its stead, is proved by the words of Aaron's proclamation, "To-morrow is a feast to the Lord." *Tetragrammaton*. (Exod. xxxii. 5.) As this fatal event was the result of their misinterpreting the wording of the Decalogue, Moses deemed it his duty to prevent their falling into a similar error; and, therefore, when he repeated the ten commandments to them, he omitted the conjunctive ו, "and," so that the passage there reads, פֶּסֶל כָּל כְּמוֹנָה, "a graven image of any form or likeness that is in heaven above, or in the earth below, or in the waters beneath the earth;" which showed them that פֶּסֶל and כְּמוֹנָה were not two distinct things, as they thought, but that the second was explanatory of the first, the meaning of both words being identically the same.

The observations we have here offered will meet the objection of those who exclaim, "How is it possible that the men who with their own eyes had beheld the Lord, and had heard him forbid idolatry, should, in the short space of forty days, bow to and worship the work of their own hands?" and who would thence insinuate doubts against the truth of the scriptural narrative; as it appears that the Israelites did not consider that they were infringing the Divine command; but in consequence of misinterpret-

ing the precise words of the commandment, they thought that, as the making an image of any existing thing was not expressly prohibited, it might be permitted. Thus the cause of their sin lay in their not properly understanding the words of the commandment, and, therefore, their consequent conduct is not inconsistent with, or irreconcilable to, the fact of the Deity having vouchsafed to reveal Himself unto them, and pronouncing in their hearing the very commandment which they had infringed.

A second objection may, however, be urged; namely, "As their sin (according to our explanation) arose from error, and was not intentional, why did the Lord punish them?" We might in reply say, That they had no right to limit the Divine command, and so to interpret its sense as to make it appear contrary to the real meaning and purpose for which it was enacted; and that, in so doing, they had made the Divine dictate subject to the interpretation of human reason. This would be a sufficient cause for the punishment that befel them. But we go on to say, that, in adopting the notion that the Spirit of the Deity might rest on an image, the work of human hands, they infringed a positive command of the Deity; which, although not embodied in the Decalogue, was made known to them immediately after the ten commandments. As we read in Holy Writ: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel: Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. Ye shall not make אֱלֹהִים, with me; gods of silver or gods of gold ye shall not make unto yourselves. An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep and thy oxen: In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." (Exod. xx. 22-24.) Here the Lord declares to them, "Ye have seen that I talked with you from heaven;" that I reveal my presence to you visibly, and in such a manner as to render your senses capable of recognising my will. This I do at my own will and

pleasure; for it is not in the power of mortals to enforce communications or emanations from on high. Therefore, "Ye shall not make with me any images of gold or silver, under the impression that they will be with me, sanctified by and with my Spirit; for that will lead you to confound the worship due to me only with that which you will pay to the image which you suppose to be hallowed by my Spirit. Therefore, while ye are not to make unto yourselves any images for any purpose of worship, or as mementos of me, ye may erect an altar of earth, on which to sacrifice your offerings to me; so that my worship only, the adoration due to me alone, is to be present to your minds when you wish to exalt your souls in prayer and communication with my Holy Spirit." This command the Israelites lost sight of, and violated by their erecting the golden calf; and, therefore, they were punished.

THE SECOND VARIATION.

"REMEMBER the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." (Exod. xx. 8.)

"Observe the Sabbath-day," &c. (Deut. v. 12.)

The difference between the two verbs "*to remember*," and "*to observe*," is evident. We can only remember that of which we have some previous knowledge: Whereas, we observe, for the future, whatever is strictly enjoined upon us. Of all the ten commandments which were given to the Israelites, the only one which had previously been made known to them was the Sabbath: All the other commandments were new; but, as this particular one was already communicated to them in the desert of Sin, it was distinguished by the emphatic word "*remember*." But, when Moses repeated the Decalogue to the Israelites, its commandments had all been repeatedly and variously communicated to them, so that they could not single out any one commandment to be recommended to their memories rather than any other. He therefore uses the word, "*observe*," not with reference to the past, but to the present and future. When the commandment was given

to the Israelites at Sinai, it was not necessary to bid them be observant of the particular day, as the manna was a sufficient sign to point out to them the precise day: Whereas in the fields of Moab, when the wondrous supply from heaven was about to cease, it became needful to impress on their minds, not only the duty of observing the laws relating to the Sabbath, but also to be careful and observe the day itself.

THE THIRD VARIATION.

"As the Lord thy God hath commanded thee." (Deuteronomy v. 12.)

These words (part of the command to keep the Sabbath holy) form no part of the Decalogue, as we read it in Exodus, but were added by Moses. The reason of this addition we suppose to be the following:—As long as the Israelites were in the desert, and fed by manna, they had no labour to perform or to abstain from, and did not stand in need of a day of rest: Therefore, their keeping that day holy could not be from selfish motives. But, now that this supply was about to be withdrawn from them, and they were to depend on the exertions of their own labour for their subsistence, they might be tempted to consider the observance of the Sabbath as a personal indulgence of ease, rest, and pleasure. Therefore, Moses deemed it his duty to remind them, that their observance of the Sabbath-day was not to be a mere corporeal indulgence and rest, but that the hallowing of that day must be with the intent and purpose of obeying the Divine commandment; and, therefore, he added the words, "As the Lord thy God hath commanded thee."

THE FOURTH VARIATION.

"Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle." (Exodus xx. 10.)

"Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy

maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle." (Deuteronomy v. 14.)

Here we find that Moses enumerates the ox and the ass distinctly and separately from the other cattle; whereas in Exodus cattle generally are mentioned, but no particular animal is enumerated. The reason of this difference is, that at Sinai they had no agricultural labours to perform, and, therefore, a general clause prohibiting them from working any of their cattle was sufficient. But when Moses repeated the Decalogue, the Israelites were about to take possession of the promised land, and destined to agricultural labours, in which the ox and the ass were the two animals most useful, and whose work they had the greatest and most frequent occasion to employ. Therefore, Moses particularises them, and then adds, "And all thy cattle," to show that the same exemption from labour was equally to be granted to all other animals.

THE FIFTH VARIATION.

"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it." (Exodus xx. 11.)

"And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: Therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day." (Deuteronomy v. 15.)

This variation in the cause why the sabbath was instituted is the greatest and most important that we find between the Decalogue in Exodus, and its repetition in Deuteronomy. At first sight we might be induced to think, that the two reasons assigned for the observance of the sabbath are inconsistent and contradictory, as there is no apparent connexion between the creation and the liberation of the Israelites. But when we consider more maturely, we shall find not only that they are perfectly consistent, but that the one

was with propriety adduced when they were liberated from Egypt, and the other with equal propriety, forty years later, when they were about to take possession of the land promised to their fathers.

In order properly to understand the institution of the sabbath, two reasons must be assigned and explained.—The first is, Why are we to rest, and abstain from all labour?

And the second, Why on this particular day? The last reason is first assigned and explained: At Sinai the Israelites were taught, that in six days the Lord created heaven and earth, that on the seventh he rested, that He blessed and sanctified the seventh day, and that, therefore, that seventh day had been selected before and above all others to be hallowed to the Lord.

(To be continued.)

V. ON HEBREW SYNONYMÈS.

(Continued from page 59.)

מדוע, למה

BOTH these particles of interrogation are rendered, “why, and wherefore.” In Hebrew there is a great difference in their application, which requires the particular attention of the student.

מדוע, composed of מה-ידע or מה-ידע, expresses an interrogation as to the cause of an action, which is termed by our grammarians, סבה הפעלה, or סבה הגרמת, “the moving or operative cause.” And למה, as composed from מה, “what?” with the dative ל, is objective, denoting an inquiry after the object or purpose of such an act, and is termed, סבה תכליתית, “the final cause, object, or purpose.” A few examples of each will explain this definition.

When בנות יתרו, “the daughters of Jethro,” returned home sooner than usual, the father asked them, מדוע מהרתן בא היום, “How is it that ye come home so soon?” (Exod. ii. 10.) He was of course not surprised at their coming home; but he enquired as to the cause of their returning so soon. Joseph asked Pharaoh’s officers, מדוע פניכם רעים היום, “Wherefore look ye so sadly this day?” (Gen. xl. 7.) מדוע לא-יבער הסנה, “Why is the bush not burnt?” (Exod. iii. 3.) מדוע לא-תליתם חקכם, “Wherefore have ye not completed your task?” (Exod. v. 14.) In these and numerous other passages the inquiry is as to the cause.

But when the Lord expostulated with Cain, he said, למה חרה לך ולמה נפלו פניך, “Why art thou angry, and why is thy countenance fallen?” (Gen. iv. 5.) The Lord well knew the cause of Cain’s sadness, but he remonstrated with him as to the purpose or object of his anger, by telling him, אם תיטב שאת, “If thou doest well, thou wilt be respected.” (Gen. iv. 5.) When אלקנה soothed the grief of his wife חנה, he used this tender expression: חנה למה תבכי, “Anna, why weepest thou? why eatest thou not?” (1 Sam. i. 8.) Elkanah was aware of the cause of her sadness, but asked as to the purpose or use by saying, הלא אנכי טוב לך מעשרה בנים, “Am I not better to thee than ten sons?” Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, למה תלכנה עמי, “Why will ye go with me?” (Ruth ii. 11.) To what purpose or object will you follow me?

על-מה, like למה, denotes an interrogation of object or purpose. על מה הבית את-אחונך, “Why or wherefore didst thou smite thine ass?” (Num. xxii. 32.) What is the purpose of striking the animal, since הנה אנכי יצאתי לשמן, “I went to withstand thee?” (Num. xxii. 32.)

על מה תכו, "Wherefore will ye be smitten?" (Isaiah i. 5.) What is the use of afflicting you any more? &c.

הלם, הנה, זה, or בזה, פה

ALL these adverbs are translated "here, hither, hitherto, in this place," &c. In Hebrew they are thus classified:—

הלם expresses a near approach towards a place of importance or dignity. The Lord said to Moses, at the vision of the סנה, "thornbush," אלהתקרב הלם, "Approach not hither, for the place is קדש, holy ground." (Exod. iii. 5.) Boaz said to Ruth, when he invited her to his table, גשי הלם, "Approach hither;" not wishing her to eat with the reapers. When David addressed the Lord, he said, "Who am I, and what is my house, בי הביאתני עד הלם, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" (2 Sam. vii. 18.) Our sages of the Talmud have explained this word in their laconic manner, in the same spirit, saying, הלם אלא מלכות. The word הלם* always expresses dignity or importance.

הנה and בזה denote an approach to a place, in an enlarged sense, without pointing out any particular spot. It expresses a residence in a city or country. Joseph said to his brethren, "Ye have not sent me הנה, hither;" to this country,—Egypt. (Gen. xlv. 8.) Again: "These are my children, which God gave me, בזה, here," in this city, or place.

But the adverb פה expresses an approach to a particular point or spot, with more precision or exactness than the other adverbs quoted: פה לבס פה, "Abide ye here:" (Gen. xxii. 5.) The Lord said to Moses, ואתה פה עמוד עמדי, "But as for thee, stand thou here with me." (Deut. v. 31.) In the sublime address to Job, when speaking of the limits of the sea, the Lord said, ערפה תבוא ולא תוסף, "Here," or hitherto, "shalt thou come, and no further." (Job xxxviii. 11.)

And it is worthy of notice that three of these adverbs of place occur in one verse, each in accordance with the above definition.

When the Danites sent out spies to ליש, they arrived at the house of מיכה, Micah; and it was asked of נער הלוי, a young Levite, מי הביאך הלם מה אתה עשה בזה ומה לך פה, "Who brought thee hither? what doest thou here? and what hast thou in this place?" (Judges xviii. 3.) Now by the context it appears that מיכה erected an idolatrous temple there. The place was, therefore, to him a place of dignity; it was therefore asked, "Who brought thee, הלם, to this important place?" Again: "What doest thou, בזה, in this country?" And, "What hast thou, פה, in this house?"

The above is the true spirit of those adverbs, as they occur in Scripture. M. J.

* Elias Levita, in אליהו פרקי ר', derives this adverb from the verb הלם, "to knock, strike." The learned Eichel remarks, that, as all the primitive roots of languages proceed from the effects and actions of nature, it is not improbable that the word הלם, "knocking," was adopted to direct the attention of persons called to the place whence the knocking proceeds, as if it were to say, "Here! Come here!"

HEBREW REVIEW

AND

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FRIDAY, MAY 15, 1835.

VOI. II.

I. GERMAN TRANSLATION OF THE TALMUD.

A TRANSLATION of the whole Talmud has long been looked upon as a desideratum among the learned; and the want has been more strongly felt, in consequence of the very great difference of opinion entertained respecting its merits, by the friends and by the adversaries of this singular compilation. On a former occasion we remarked, that "the world at large,—which at present is obliged to form its opinion of this work on hearsay, or from extracts selected, either by inveterate assailants or zealous defenders,

—will not arrive at a correct estimate until the whole work shall have been translated and illustrated; *an undertaking rather to be wished for, than expected.*"* This wish is, however, nearer its accomplishment than, at that time, we had supposed. The Prospectus of a forthcoming translation into German, of the whole Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud, has been presented to us, which, at the request of the learned Translator, we now submit to our readers.

PROSPECTUS.

THE spirit of the present age, which evinces so decided a love of that which is new and extraordinary, is equally distinguished by the ardent zeal with which it tries to discover and illustrate the remains of antiquity in every part of the world; in order, by their aid, to raise arts, poetry, and all the sciences to the greatest elevation of which they are capable; and, especially, to trace their collective design and purpose in religion, that central point of unity in reference to all human knowledge. Thus we see, that in the burning South zealous efforts are employed to decipher the Hieroglyphics of Egypt, and to discover their alphabet; while in the remotest East the works of Indian sages are being unfolded with equal activity and skill. We of the North are occupied with another not less valuable production of antiquity; namely, with a German translation of the whole Talmud, a work distinguished from those which we mentioned before, and deserving of a higher place, because it treats, not of the deification of Osiris, or the incarnation of Bramah, but of the knowledge and adoration of the Most High, and of the law of Moses in its most extended and comprehensive sense; and because it contains many maxims of the purest morality and virtue. A translation of the whole Talmud is, particularly at present, most important and desirable; as its great usefulness in the study of Divinity and of the Shemitic languages, and especially in the study of Jewish history, is generally acknowledged; and as the Israelites,—who, since the second destruction of Jerusalem, are chiefly indebted to the Talmud for their preservation as a distinct people and for their mental culture,—continue to be considered as actual members of every particular state in which they reside.

The difficulties which have to be overcome in a translation of the whole

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. I. p. 5.

Talmud, are incomparably greater than those which attend the translation of other ancient works. These respectively are formed on a less complicated plan, have a phraseology which is easily explained, and are written with one purpose or tendency only, by which all the various parts are regulated, and in accordance with which they may be expounded; in addition to which a greater or less store of auxiliary works offer their aid: Whereas in the Talmud the forms of expression are as various as the subjects of which it treats; so that the solution of one obscure phrase does not offer any criterion for that of others; nor are there any auxiliary sources, the aid of which can be rendered available. While other remains of antiquity mostly appertain to nations in whom the principle of vitality is still extant, and who expend the utmost vigour of research in order to discover and properly to understand the contents of these ancient relics: While these can produce documentary evidence to attest their truth and authenticity, and the aid of imperishable monuments, which, like beautiful blossoms, expand before the eye of the searcher, and attract his attention: The Talmud, on the contrary, relates to a nationality which has ceased to exist, to facts obscure alike in themselves as in the remoteness of the period at which they occurred; and is composed in a language, which, though forcible and expressive, possesses but little attraction. The Talmud presents us with a mass of dead letters only, which must become animated by proper exposition ere they afford any satisfaction, but which eventually will yield that gratification which alone can reward the infinite labour of the translator, or strengthen his zeal and perseverance. Accordingly, we must not feel surprised that the Talmud, although its precepts were in force when Jerusalem was in its glory, and full fifteen hundred years have elapsed since the greater part of the work was composed, has never yet been translated. We have reason to doubt the assertion of the Jochasin, that R. Isaac and R. Joseph Stanis translated the whole of the Talmud into Arabic about the year 1000 of the Christian era. The strict divine who considers the Talmud as a purely theological work, in which he seeks no other expressions or doctrines than those relating to the study of divinity, is liable to fall into and commit great errors when he likewise meets with juridical maxims, philosophical axioms, and historical facts, blended together, and developed in the most singular manner. He soon discovers that he is disappointed in his expectations, his zeal cools, and he readily resigns to another task which he feels that he could never have truly performed or properly completed.

The linguist who treats the dogmas of the Talmud literally, construes them according to the rules of grammar, and seeks to develop their meaning according to an arbitrary standard, determined, perhaps, by his own prejudices, may probably unfold a beautiful system of reasoning, partly religious and partly logical; but he will never spread a true and clear light over the contents of the Talmud. For who, in an attempt to explain a Ramajan or Mahabharat, or to decypher hieroglyphics, would be swayed by the actual condition of Indians or Egyptians of the present day? Who would presume to judge the doctrines of a Marcion or an Origen according to a vapid orthodoxy of ideas, or subject them to the yoke of perfect slavery to the letter of what they wrote? Could any man correctly judge them, or their doctrines, without due consideration of the whole theological development, without knowing the mental tendencies [which at that time prevailed, or examin-

ing the purposes which each strove to attain, and [the ground on which they took their stand? And are we justified in blaming the authors of the Talmud, if they often imitate nature, and envelope the precious but tender fruit in an unsavoury and inedible rind; in order that, while the tasteless shell performs its office, the rich kernel may be sought and found? It is needful that we should absolutely identify ourselves with the genius of that remote age, and its way of thinking, and ever transplant ourselves to those scenes and seats of tyranny and foul oppression, in order to arrive at the truth, and to recognise, in any attempted translation, the faithfulness and verity of the original.

Our translation of the whole Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud, which during several years has occupied our undivided labours, together with the Commentaries of Rashi, Tosaphoth, Maimonides, Rabbenu Simeon, and R. Asher, will form twenty-eight volumes large folio. The text of the Mishna will be given with the vowel points complete; and in the text of the Gemara, as well as of the Commentaries, the most careful punctuation will be observed, in order, as much possible, to facilitate this study to the reader. Etymological illustrations will be added on each page, and the improved reading as well of the Gemara as of the Commentaries will be inserted, as appears from the specimen. At the end of each treatise in the Babylonian Talmud, the extract of Rabbenu Asher will be added; to which the same treatise of the Jerusalem Talmud, together with the Commentaries thereon, and our translation, will be subjoined.

From the present progress of our labours, we can with confidence promise that two or three volumes will annually appear, so that the whole of the work will be completed within ten years.

As an introduction and review of the whole Talmud, we have published a "Compendium of the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud, (Berlin, 1832, 4to,) with a preface, by the Consistorial Counsellor, Professor and Doctor Bellerman. This first part contains the origin, language, and authenticity of the Talmud, the life and actions of one of its principal founders, the geography of all the cities mentioned in the Talmud, with due attention to the principal schools and teachers of the Talmudic age.

Subscribers receive the first of the Compendium immediately, payable on delivery, as are also the parts and volumes as they successively appear, the price of each volume being twenty shillings. The work will be put to press in the commencement of 1835, and be continued with uninterrupted diligence.

Signed,

M. PINNER,

Doctor of Medicine and Philosophy, Member
of the Asiatic Society, Paris.

Berlin, 15th August, 1834.

In a letter which Dr. Pinner, who is at present in London, has addressed to us, he states,—“On a three years’ journey, during which I have visited all the Universities of Germany, France, and Italy, this undertaking (the translation of the Talmud) has raised the most lively interest, and met with the greatest encouragement. Not only do the most learned divines and Orientalists afford it their unqualified support, (vide *Leipzig Literary Journal*, Number 144, June, 1832, *Review of the Compendium*, by Professors Rosenmüller and Krugh,) but the Monarchs and Princes, to whom I have

had the high honour of being personally presented, have been pleased to subscribe to the work. The present number of subscribers amounts to eight hundred; but two hundred more are required in order to cover the heavy expenditure which the work occasions. I shall be happy to submit the list of Subscribers, together with the Compendium, to those gentlemen who may be pleased to acquaint me with their intention to patronise this work, to my address, No. 31, Great Prescott-street, Goodman's-fields."

While we call the attention of our readers to the above Prospectus, we need hardly add, that the erudite and enterprising translator has our best wishes. Respecting his undertaking, we subjoin the opinion of two competent judges, the learned Professors Rosenmuller and Krug, who, in their Review of the Compendium, say, "To a learned Christian, who does not devote himself, from his boyhood, to the exclusive study of the Talmud, as the Jews do, but who meets with so many branches of learning which claim his attention, it is almost impossible to arrive at a proper and correct understanding of the Talmud in all its parts. The work now before us (the Compendium, &c.) justifies our expectation, that the whole Talmud will become accessible to the student through the labours of a learned and classically educated Jew, who, from his infancy, has zealously occupied himself with the Talmud, of which he now promises us a faithful translation. From the author's intimate acquaintance with his subject, and his extensive philological attainments as evinced in the specimen before us, we expect that his undertaking will be of the most essential service to the Talmudic student."—*Leipziger Literatur Zeitung*, 11th June, 1834.

The list of subscribers is graced with the autograph recommendations of several eminent Rabbies on the Continent.

II. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבן. COMMENTS BY NAPIITALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 84.)

R. ELEAZAR Hamodai said, "He who profaneth that which is sacred, who despiseth the appointed festivals, who putteth his neighbour to shame in public, who breaketh the covenant of our father Abraham, or expoundeth the law contrary to its true sense, although he may be learned in the law, and perform good deeds, yet will he have no share in the world to come." (III. 15.)

COMMENTARY. *He who profaneth that which is sacred*—There are five classes of atheists whose gradations our teacher indicates by the special offence which he assigns to each. Foremost in reprobation are those who, denying the existence of the Deity, scoff at his holy law, and seek by their ribaldry and scurrility to profane that which all other men consider as most sacred, namely, the glorious attributes of the Most High, and his will as made known by Him, in the law He vouchsafed to reveal to us. The blasphemies such men are in the habit of uttering are too horrid for repetition. The man whose mind is matured by reflection, and who contemplates the wondrous works of nature, every one of which proclaims the power and goodness of the Creator, must feel convinced that a Being so mighty, wise, and beneficent would not leave the most perfect of his terrestrial creatures without some indication of the purpose for which it is called into existence, without some direction for its guidance, how to avoid evil, and do good: And that these directions must be made known to man by direct revelation from the Deity, and cannot possibly emanate from

any other source than the word of God. Coming to such conclusions, which no man can fail to do, who at all makes use of the reason with which the Deity has gifted him, and who consults the sacred Book in which the Divine laws are contained, it is impossible that the crude and unfledged notions of the infidel should in any way influence his mind, or sway his belief. But youth and inexperience are apt to be led astray by the specious sophistry, and, above all, by the ribald wit and the independent carriage which the infidel is fond of displaying. The ardour of the youthful may become captivated by the apparent fearlessness of the atheist: His mistaken vanity is flattered by doctrines which teach him that he is altogether independent of any Superior Power, and that he is his own best guide and legislator. He listens to the soul-destroying harangues of the atheist, whose insidious arguments lead him on, until eventually he looks upon nothing as holy, sets up his own wicked ideas as the sole standard of right and of wrong, and, in so doing, profanes that which is most sacred,—the revealed will of God. And as such may be the result of the example set by a continued profanation of the holy law in word or deed, our teacher places the scoffer foremost in the ranks of those who have no share in the life to come.

Who despiseth the appointed festivals—By these words our teacher indicates the second class of infidels, who, though they allow the existence of a Supreme Power, deny the creation of the world by that power, but maintain that matter is increate. They consequently deny the truths of revelation, and, therefore, despise festivals appointed to commemorate events the truth of which they dispute; for all the festivals which we Israelites celebrate, are appointed by the will of God, and are founded on some important occurrence, or for some important purpose connected with our history and existence as the chosen people of God. But he who denies the creation of the world, also denies

our history, because it is miraculous, or relates facts which are not in accordance with the ordinary course of nature. For if the Deity did not create matter, he could not lay down the laws by which it should be regulated, as these laws must in that case have emanated from its inherent qualities; consequently, not having laid down these laws, he could not have the power to alter or suspend them, or to produce a miracle; and, therefore, whatever is related in the law, of the wonders performed by Moses and other prophets through the power of God, is fabulous, and the book which relates such fables is not worthy of credence. Such is the reasoning of the *materialist*, and accordingly he denies the sanctity of the sabbath instituted to commemorate creation, an event which he does not believe; of the passover, which commemorates the miraculous exit from Egypt; and the pentecost, which celebrates the giving of the law at Sinai; all of which he declares to be fabulous and untrue: And as such is the estimation in which he holds the book wherein is contained the law of God, he further asserts that festivals celebrated by the rest of his people, because they are enacted in that book, are not worthy of his observance. And as he thus denies the fundamental principle of the Divine laws, namely, that God is the Creator of the universe and of whatever it contains, our teacher assigns him the second station among those who have no share in the life to come.

Who putteth his neighbour to shame in public—Our teacher here alludes to a third class of infidels, who, though they believe that there is a God, and that He has created the universe, assert that man is not gifted with an immortal soul, or is in any way superior to the brute creation, except by being endowed with a greater portion of sagacity and intelligence than other animals. Therefore they hold the human race in contempt, and therefore he who entertains this opinion is not careful of the honour and fair fame of his fellow men, and hesitates not publicly to put his neighbour to shame by

word or deed. The influence this opinion exercises over the minds of those by whom it is upheld, is alike pernicious to themselves and to mankind. It is the root of that utter indifference, which renders men callous to the common feelings of humanity, and tempts them to sacrifice the lives and welfare of thousands to their own egotism and ambition. The conqueror who slaughters thousands on the field of battle, the tyrant who rules millions with the iron rod of oppression, the unprincipled gambler who sacrifices the welfare of all his connections to satiate his inordinate desire of gain, the debauchee who pollutes innocence and violates the most sacred rights of hospitality to gratify his lust, the highway robber who fells his victim in order to plunder and strip him of the dross he carries about his person, each and all of these might trace the origin of their misdeeds to the belief that man is no better than the beasts of the field, is doomed like them to perish, and that he has no individual purpose or existence in creation; that, therefore, provided we can by force or craft evade the immediate vengeance of those we injure or oppress, there is no other responsibility which we have to encounter, or which we need to fear. And as, of all man's possessions, none is more valuable to him than his honour, our teacher sums up every wrong or injury that can be inflicted by one man on another, 'in the few but emphatic words, "who putteth his neighbour to shame" (or robs him of his honour) "in public." The infidel who is capable of doing this, because he places the human race on a level with the brutes, is one of those who, our teacher tells us, can have no share in the life to come.

Who breaketh the covenant of our father Abraham—Our teacher here means those who deny the unity of God, and maintain that there is no distinction between the religious and the impious in this world. Therefore they slight the covenant the Deity entered into with our father Abraham, the conditions of which were, that as Abraham devoted him-

self and his descendants to the service of the only true God, and in token of allegiance imprinted an indelible sign on himself and on them; the Deity in return declared that "these descendants should be unto Him a chosen people, a kingdom of Priests, to whose guardianship and observance His laws, statutes, and commandments should be confided." And as it was in consequence of that covenant that our ancestors were redeemed from the house of bondage in Egypt, through the miraculous interposition of the Deity: As it was in consequence of the promise made to Abraham,—“In thee shall all families of earth be blessed,” (Gen. xii. 3.)—that his descendants were at an after-period brought to Mount Sinai, where the Lord in his glory revealed himself to the Israelites and made known to them his will; he who denies, slights, or breaks the covenant of Abraham, likewise rejects the revealed will of God; and therefore has no share in the life to come.

Who expounds the law contrary to its true sense—Our teacher here means those who deny that the law which we have at present, emanated from the Lord, and who, therefore, slight the Torah, or five books of Moses, either wholly, or in part. These exalt their own futile reason above the truths of revelation. And, because they cannot comprehend why some unimportant facts, or some commandments, the utility of which they choose to question, have been recorded in the books of Moses, they deny the Divine authority of his laws, and deem themselves freed from all obedience to the commands which the Deity enforced through his chosen servant; and in so doing they reject the only true and perfect standard which has been granted to man, the only means he has of knowing what is acceptable to his Creator, and what are his duties towards the society of which he is a member, and towards himself. For, every law that has emanated from human wisdom and authority carries within itself the marks of its origin, and is frail, imperfect, and mutable, like those to whom it owes its existence.

Its precepts and enactments may be adapted for one nation or age, but may be useless to every other: Whereas the law, which emanated from Divine wisdom and authority, is perfect and immutable, like its Origin: The precepts and commandments which it enjoins are adapted to all men, whatever their rank or station, age or country; and while human laws necessarily find their influence limited to earth, the laws of God not only point out to man the conduct most proper to be pursued in this life, but also secure to him the bliss of a future state. He, therefore, who denies the Divine authority of the law of Moses, and teaches others so to do, is guilty of the greatest outrage on humanity, because he robs mankind of their stay in the hour of adversity, their guide in the hour of prosperity, their aid and support when temptations assail them, and their only consolation in the hour of death; and, therefore, our teacher justly places him in the list of those who have no share in the life to come.

Although he may be learned in the law, &c.—We must not feel surprised, that our teacher should assume that infidels may be conversant with the Divine laws, or perform good deeds, as it is possible they may have studied, and profited by their studies, before their minds became bewildered in the mazes of infidelity. It may be the case, that, out of vanity, and to make a display of their learning, they are assiduous in their studies of the law. It is also possible, that they may conduct themselves with propriety in their intercourse, with mankind, and even practise such virtues as are most congenial to their temper and feelings. For we often find men, who, as a consequence of their natural temper and inclinations, are tender and kind-hearted, foes to oppression, lovers of charity and benevolence, who condemn injustice, and consider themselves disgraced were they to wrong or injure any man; but whose hearts are, nevertheless, so far from God, that they even question his existence. Of them Solomon saith, “Thou mayest see a

man wise in his own conceit, but the fool hath a better hope than he.” (Proverbs xxvi. 12.) His meaning is: The wise in his own conceit is he who acts with a high hand, and despises the law of the Lord; the fool is he who is swayed by his passions, and, yielding to the impulse of his desires, transgresses the command of God. We may sometimes see, that the man who is wise in his own conceit, is by nature gifted with those virtues which spring from moderation, and the absence of inordinate desires, or from tenderness of disposition, and natural kind-heartedness; while the fool, on the contrary, reels on in his career of iniquity, stimulated and impelled by the force of his passions. To a superficial observer, the former, who appears the better man of the two, seems likewise entitled to a better futurity; but if we maturely reflect, that, while he who sins from impulse may expiate his crimes by submitting to the law, by heartfelt penitence and prayer, the wise in his own conceit, the atheist, whose conscience is poisoned by his pernicious opinions, so that he does not even feel he is doing wrong, can by no means become truly penitent, or implore the Divine pardon. Therefore, the fool, who may become conscious of his crimes, has a better hope than he who, wise in his own conceit, persuades himself that he is doing no wrong, and who perhaps is confirmed in his dangerous security and indifference, because he knows within himself that his conduct is not immoral, that he is not addicted to any glaring vice, but, on the contrary, is moderate in his indulgence, and tender in his disposition, and who, therefore, flatters himself with the idea, that he is virtuous. It is to dissipate this fatal illusion; it is, if possible, to arrest the bewildered infidel on the threshold of the labyrinth in which he is about to lose himself, and from which, once fairly entered, there is no escape, that our teacher tells him in a voice of thunder, “Though thou mayest be learned in the law, though the natural bent of thy inclinations may prevent thy becoming guilty of any

glaring crime, or induce thee to perform many a good action, yet thou art lost, O infidel ! For thee there is no hope ; thou hast no share in the life to come. Thy learning, thy mundane virtues, serve but to aggravate thy sins ; for thou shouldest have made better use of thy one, and known by whom the others were bestowed. They add to thy fearful responsibility, as they have given additional weight to thy pestilent example, and additional influence to thy soul-destroying doctrines. For when the youthful and the unwary sees thee, a man learned in the law of God, and whose actions are, by general consent, allowed to be free from reproach ; and even, in some instances, praiseworthy ; and hears thee deriding that very law in which thou art learned, and denying its Divine authority : What can he think, but that thou, a fair-dealing man, wouldst not on light grounds promulgate doctrines like those to which thou givest utterance ? Thus thy learning and mundane virtues produce such an impression on him as without these advantages, thou couldst not have effected ; his soul becomes polluted and lost ; and it is the perverse use thou hast made of thy learning, it is the unfortunate influence which thy apparent virtues have obtained for thee, that have caused him to adopt thy principles, and to become as thou art,—excluded from all portion in the life to come.

Thus we see, that among all offences man can be guilty of, none is so heinous, so destructive of all hope, so utterly inexpiable, as confirmed atheism : As, not only is the crime of the infidel aggravated by those

very circumstances which others plead in extenuation of their transgressions, namely, assiduous study of the Divine laws, and the performance of good deeds ; but as he is incapable of penitence and prayer ; as he denies the existence of that Being from whose mercy alone he may hope for pardon, and the authority of those precepts which alone can bring him back to a sense of what is right, he shuts himself out from every hope of atonement or forgiveness. Therefore, Holy Writ decrees the punishment of the infidel to be, *הכרת תכרת*, “ he shall be utterly cut off,” (Numbers xv. 30,) a penalty not to be exacted by any human power, but by the Deity only ; not confined to this life, but to a future state likewise. As our Rabbies say, *הכרת*, “ he shall be cut off,” in this world ; *הכרת תכרת*, “ he shall be utterly cut off,” in the next world. (Talmud, treatise *Chelek*, first chapter.) Therefore, the sacred Singer, while he stigmatizes the infidel with his true designation, also tells him his fate : “ The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Thou hast put them to shame, for thou, O God, hast despised them.” (Psalm liii. 1, 5.) And, therefore, our teacher declares, “ He has no share in the life to come.” While Holy Writ concludes the emphatic passage, which denounces the infidel, and pronounces his doom, with the remarkable words, “ His iniquity shall be (or remain) upon him ;” (Numbers xv. 31 ;) thereby to caution us, that when once atheism takes firm root in the human mind, it stifles conscience and penitence, and leaves no hope of amelioration or atonement.

(To be continued.)

III. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim : “ BOOK OF PRINCIPLES : ” BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 89.)

CHAPTER VIII.

WE commence with the proofs taken from the general state of things, to establish the superintend-

ence of Providence. Among these proofs the first rank is due to the existence of the habitable earth. He who denies the superintendence and interposition of Providence in ter-

restrial matters maintains that the world is governed by the laws of nature, at present in force, and that no superior influence is exercised either to maintain or interrupt the existing order of things: But the existence of the habitable earth is a proof that the world was created according to the will and design of Providence. For, according to the essential qualities of the elements, and to the laws of nature which they obey, the earth ought to have been covered with water, so that neither vegetables nor animals could be found thereon: But the existence of the habitable earth in the midst of the waters is a proof of the will and superintendence of the Divine Providence, which compels nature to obey His commands. Accordingly, in the remonstrance which the Deity addresses to Job, this is the first proof which He adduces when He says, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare if thou hast understanding." (Job xxxviii. 4.) He who says that matter or the universe is increate, grounds his arguments on the existing state of things; but this is altogether incorrect: For if the world were increate, and had always conducted itself on the principles it now does, without the intervention of any external influence or control, the necessary consequence is, that nature and its laws ought at all times to have been precisely the same as they are now. It is a fact, founded on, and proved by, the nature of the element, that water should overflow and cover the land, and that, accordingly, all the habitable earth being submerged in the waters, no other than aquatic animals and vegetables ought to exist; but neither men, quadrupeds, birds, trees, nor flowers ought to be found on earth. Such would be the natural influence of the element, exercised from time without beginning; and if such at any time was the case, (as it must unquestionably have been,) who is He whose power compelled the waters to recede, contrary to the nature of the element, and caused the dry land to appear and teem with new productions, all created for the comfort and happiness

of man? Who is He whose power assigned limits to the sea, and confines it within those limits, by saying, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further?" There can be but one reply: It is the superintending Providence of the Deity and his will, which, having called into being earth, sea, and whatever they contain, and, having laid down certain laws for the operations of nature, maintains those laws, because such is His will. And this is a conclusive proof in support of the assertion, that the universe is not increate, and that the state of nature has not always been what now it is, but that the whole was created and is regulated according to the will and design of Providence, which maintains the law itself as laid down. Thus the Divine reproof to Job was, "Thou who presumest thus to question my superintending Providence, where wert thou, or the whole human race, when I caused dry land to appear above the waters, contrary to the essential qualities of both the elements? (earth and water?)" And the reproof continues: "Who has laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who has stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, or who laid the corner-stone thereof?" (Job xxxviii. 5, 6.) The admirable order which prevails throughout the universe, and the exactness with which all parts of nature obey the laws laid down for them, form another irrefragable proof that it is the superintendence of Providence, the will of the Deity, which governs the world: As it is utterly impossible that this admirable order should be the result of accident; or that laws, originating from hazard and not laid down by any fixed purpose or design, should continue uninterrupted in force without any external control or influence whatever being exercised to maintain them. These facts, taken from the general state of things, and the order of nature, are so unquestionable, and the proofs they afford of the superintendence of Divine Providence are so conclusive and satisfactory to human reason, that we often find their testimony appealed to in Holy

Writ, in order to impress mankind with the conviction that Divine Providence does take cognizance of terrestrial events. Thus we find the prophet, when reproving the evil-doers of his day, who feared not God, and who maintained that there was no Providence; that the world was increate, and that the order of nature was accidental, exclaims, "Hear now this, O foolish people without understanding, which have eyes and see not: Fear ye not me? saith the Lord, will ye not tremble at my presence, who have appointed the sands as a boundary to the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass them? though its waves may toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it:" (Jer. v. 21, 22.) Appealing to the existence of the habitable earth, in the midst of the waters, and to the limits assigned to their progress, and which they cannot exceed, as proofs conclusive and satisfactory to human reason, that there must be a Divine superintending Providence which called the present state of nature into being, and maintains the laws and order by which every part of the universe is governed. Thus, likewise, the sacred Singer appeals to the same fact when he says, "He loveth righteousness and judgment; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap. He layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake and it was; he commanded and it stood fast." (Ps. xxxiii. 5—9.) He begins by saying that, although the Lord loveth righteousness and justice, and therefore has laid down those laws by which nature is governed, and the universal order preserved; nevertheless it is the mercy of God, and his goodness, which, as it gave the earth its being, still preserves it and its inhabitants. To prove this assertion, he adduces the fact of the habitable earth being raised above the waters, contrary to the natural and inherent

qualities of both elements. He then calls upon all the inhabitants of the earth to fear the Lord, because "He spake and it was;" by His word the habitable earth was called forth, and the waters compelled to recede: "He commanded, and it stood firm;" by His command the order of things which his bounteous will established, is confirmed, and no part of the universe attempts to disobey his behest. Having thus mentioned the great proof drawn from the general state of things, the sacred Singer proceeds to inform us that the same superintending Providence of the Deity, which is made manifest by these proofs, is likewise extended to the human race, and takes cognizance of their individual actions. Therefore, he says, "The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of man. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of earth. He fashioneth their hearts alike, he considereth all their works." (Ps. xxxiii. 13—15.) The Lord whose Providence presided over creation and pronounced the immutable decree which governs the universe; He it is who looks down on the sons of man. He is alike the Creator of every individual, who takes cognizance of all their deeds. And in order further to teach us, that, as every species of animals, together with all the productions of earth, are created solely for the happiness of man; the superintendence of Providence,—which as to every other kind of creatures is extended generally to the whole species, and cares only for the preservation of the race, but does not take cognizance of the various individuals composing each species,—is on the contrary extended alike to every individual composing the human race; and that they are governed not by natural instincts, but by the merciful interposition of Providence, he concludes by saying, "There is none saved by the multitude of an host, a mighty man is not saved by much strength. Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy." (Psalm xxxiii. 16, 18.) With all other animals, the stronger

overcomes the weaker, and the greater number conquers the less; but such is not the case with man: He is not under the exclusive dominion of that general rule which decides that the greater strength or numbers must prevail against the lesser: But he is under the influence of Providence, which takes cognizance of his deeds, and extends its merciful aid to him, although, in the ordinary course of nature, he would be overwhelmed by superior numbers or crushed by the superior force which is exerted against him. Thus it is proved from the general state of things as evinced in the existence of the habitable earth in the midst of the waters, that the superintending Providence of the Deity is extended to the earth and its inhabitants; taking cognizance of animals according to their respective species, and of men according to the various and distinct deeds of every individual.

The second proof, taken from the general state of things, is deduced from rain. For, although this proof does not, as at first sight it appears, establish the superintendence of Providence, as extended to individuals and to their actions; yet as we find that both Eliphaz and Elihu support their arguments by this function of nature, and as moreover the Deity likewise mentions it in his reproof to Job, it becomes our duty to dwell on the evidence which this proof affords us of the superintendence of Divine Providence. It is evident that this lower creation could not subsist without rain; not only to promote the growth of vegetation required for the nourishment of animate beings, but also to refresh them from the heat and scorching rays of the sun. These two beneficial results produced by the rain are mentioned by Eliphaz, when he says, "I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause, who does great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number, who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields: To set up on high those that be low, that those which mourn may be exalted to safety:" (Job v. 8—11 :) Meaning, that as the rain descends,

flowers, shrubs, and ears of corn, with all that grows upon earth raise their drooping heads, and imbibe fresh vigour and animation as the cheering drops fall on them; and also that it cools and refreshes exhausted nature, which it protects against the parching heat of the sun. The argument which Elihu adduces is not only similar in its nature, but has likewise a further purpose. He says, "Behold, God is great and beyond our ken; the number of his years beyond our research. For he maketh small the drops of water; they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof; which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly." (Job xxxvi. 26—28.) Here we see that Elihu concentrates the manifold blessings which result from rain in the benefit thereby conferred on man; because, while all this nether creation does indispensably require rain for its subsistence, yet as it is altogether created for the comfort and happiness of mankind, it is he who ought to be most grateful for the bounties which rain so abundantly confers upon him.

Were we to assign the falling of rain to nature only, we should be wrong; for whatsoever results from the invariable laws of nature is repeated in precisely the same manner at certain stated seasons; whereas rain at uncertain: The quantity which falls is not the same in every year, nor does it fall at certain periods only, and during the same space of time as in previous years, but descends in an irregular and variable manner, which is quite contrary to the ordinary rules that guide the operations of nature; for after a considerable time has elapsed without rain, and general drought prevails, it is not in accordance with what we have a right to expect, that, of a sudden, humid particles should collect in the air, and vapours ascend from the parched surface of the earth, until rain again descends in abundance. This proves to us, that the falling of rain at uncertain intervals, in greater or less quantities and duration, is not an ordinary operation of nature, but depends on the will and purpose of the Deity. This indeed is expressly declared in the Divine re-

proof to Job, who had said, "When he made a decree for the rain;" (Job xxviii. 26;) and in these words 'expressed his opinion that rain obeyed the general law of nature only, and who therefore is asked, "Hath the rain a father? or who has begotten the drops of dew?" (Job xxxviii. 28.) Can the rain be, as thou sayest, an ordinary operation of nature, which is to it as a father whom it obeys, and performs its functions of refreshing the nether creation, and providing food for the countless millions who inhabit the earth? or is there any cause other than my will, which, when no rain falls, begets the dewdrops to moisten the earth and refresh its inhabitants? Nor can it be asserted, that the falling of rain is accidental, and depends on adventitious causes. For in a system so well regulated as that of the universe, no function, the performance of which is indispensably necessary for the preservation of any part of creation, can by possibility be abandoned to accidental causes, which may, or may not, arise: As this would disturb the order and plan which conducts the whole, and which forbids that accidents or adventitious circumstances should at all interfere with its progress. And as thus it is proved that rain is not regulated by nature alone, nor yet caused by accident, it can only originate from the will and design of the Creator, and according to the superintendence of his Divine Providence, providing sustenance for all the nether creation which has been called into being for the happiness and comfort of man. And although it is true, that this superintendence is general, and extends to the whole human race, yet it is equally true, that it is likewise individual, and vouchsafed to the righteous, as Elijah and others, who, by their prayers, have caused the rain to descend in abundance, and thereby proved that even this operation of nature is connected with the individual superintendence of Providence, and its cognizance of human actions. Accordingly, our Rabbies allegori-

cally say, "Three keys are not confided to any messenger,—that of life, of rain, and of the resurrection of the dead." (Talmud, treatise *Sanhedrim*, folio 113.) Their meaning is, that the giving of life, the causing of rain to descend, and calling up the dead from their graves, is not decided by the ordinary laws of nature, but by the superintendence of Providence.

The prophets often appeal to rain as a proof of the Divine Providence. Thus we read: "But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. They say not in their hearts, Let us now fear the Lord our God, who giveth rain, both the former and the latter in his season. He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest." (Jeremiah v. 23, 24.) The sacred Singer says, "Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass grow." (Psalm cxlvii. 8.) And as it is impossible the rain can fall in any other direction than that by which the wind, according to the Divine will guides, the prophet, exhorting and reproving the Israelites because they denied the superintendence of Providence, says: "And I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest, and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: One piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not, withered." (Amos iv. 7.) The facts which the prophet here relates are most conclusive, and prove, beyond dispute, that the rain descends according to the will of Providence, inasmuch as it falls only in such places, and at such times, as the will of the Deity decrees; while other places, although closely bordering upon those which are abundantly irrigated, yet remain parched for want of rain. This, then, is another proof from the general state of things, that the superintendence of Providence does extend to individuals, and take cognizance of their actions.

(To be continued.)

IV. TALMUDIC ALLEGORIES.

(Continued from page 90.)

ELIJAH.

ELIJAH was of a fiery spirit ; and with a spirit of fire he performed his prophetic office. He called flames down from heaven, and consumed his own life in his zeal.

Wearied and exhausted, he withdrew from the haunts of men ; in the dreary desert he threw himself under a juniper tree, and sighed, "It is enough ! Now, O Lord, take my soul unto thee."

And an angel of the Lord strengthened him ; and he reached the mountain of Horeb, where the Lord removed the burthen of his prophetic calling off his shoulders, and directed him to anoint another in his stead.

And when, with the anointed Elisha, Elijah came to the river Jordan, a fiery chariot and fiery horses appeared ; the two companions were separated, and Elijah ascended to the throne.

The first who appeared to him in the regions of bliss was Moses, his prototype. He reached Elijah his right hand, through the purifying flames of the fiery chariot, and said to him, "Thou hast been zealous, my brother ; thy zeal has been ardent, and thou hast suffered much from thy brethren. I too have suffered the like ; still I prayed for their preservation, and offered my soul as a ransom for theirs. Nevertheless, approach the throne of the Judge, the All-merciful." With trembling steps Elijah advanced to the cloud of the throne.

"What doest thou here, Elijah ?" demanded a voice from out of the throne. He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Hosts : For Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword : I, only I was left, and they sought my life to take it away."

And a fire went forth from the cloud ; but the Lord was not in the fire. And a wind went forth from the cloud ; strong and irresistible, it rent the mountains, and brake in

pieces the rocks ; but the Lord was not in the wind.

The wind and the fire had passed, when a still small voice was heard. A sensation never before experienced penetrated the prophet, and the flame of his spirit became chastened like the radiance of dawn. "Rest thou here," said the voice, "repose and gain new vigour after thy toils ; for the Lord is merciful and benevolent. Thou shalt often again descend to the sons of men ; thou shalt teach, but with mild kindness ; thou shalt console and aid them with thy love, nor longer punish them in thy zeal ; for the Lord is gracious."

And often since then has Elijah visited mankind, but in a different spirit from that which animated him during his earthly sojourn. What before was ardent jealousy, is now loving kindness ; what was fiery zeal is now mildness and benevolence. Invisibly, or in an assumed shape, he guides the conversation of those who seek true wisdom, and unites their souls. He it is who turns the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents. Harbinger of good, he aids the righteous in the hour of danger, and is ever present to solace and strengthen those who pray. His office it is to proclaim to mankind the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

* * * * *

SAMMAEL.

WHEN the Lord first made man out of the dust, and had crowned the perishable material with the diadem of his likeness, he presented his latest creation to the angelic hosts of heaven. Joyfully the angels saluted their younger brother ; cheerfully they attended him when his bridal-feast was celebrated in Paradise.

One only of them, the proud Sammael scorned the earth-born creation. "Am I not formed out of light," he exclaimed, "while thou

art but dust of the earth? The fiery stream which flows from the throne of glory forms my essence, while the frail, perishable mould is thy substance."

And, behold! the stream of light departed from him! As melts the snow, the glorious raiment which ornamented him with its radiance vanished; the proudest of spirits became the meanest, stripped of that power which was not his own.

Inflamed with rage he withdrew from the celestial hosts, and vowed vengeance against man, the innocent cause of his fall. "I have become unhappy through you," he exclaimed, "and ye shall become unhappy through me!" He had heard the Divine decree which prohibited Adam from eating the pernicious fruits of the tree of knowledge. He collected the last rays of his departed radiance, and tried to seduce them in the guise of an angel of light. But the snow melted, out of which he strove to form his garment; and when he trod the path of the se-

ducer, he appeared in the semblance of the serpent; nothing remained of the splendid seraph, who hid himself beneath the glittering colours of the snake.

Eve saw and admired him. She soon was seduced. She ate death, and reached to her husband the fruits of death. Sorrow and misery sprung from their deed, an inheritance to their latest descendants.

The Creator appeared. He judged the seduced with mercy, but rigorously he punished the seducing serpent. Accursed, it became a loathsome and detested reptile, crawling on earth. "Because it has been thy delight," He spoke to Sammael, "to make others unhappy, let joy at the grief and misery of others be henceforth thy unhallowed portion." Exiled from the hosts of the blessed, denied all participation in those blissful pursuits which once he shared with them, Sammael roams accursed, the executioner of his own fearful punishment—THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

(To be continued.)

V. COMMENTARIES ON HOLY WRIT.

THE VARIATIONS IN THE DECALOGUE,

Exodus xx. 1-17, and Deuteronomy v. 6-21.

From the *בכורי העתים* for 5588 (1824) page 88.

(Continued from page 95.)

THE first reason, namely, why we are to rest and abstain from all labour on the sabbath-day, is the miraculous exit from Egypt: But as, when the Israelites heard the decalogue at Sinai, they had left Egypt but fifty days, and the events which they had witnessed, and the sufferings they had endured, were still fresh in their memory, it was not held needful again to recal those events to their minds, as doubtless, when celebrating the sabbath, they would compare their present with their former state, and thank the Lord who had redeemed them. Whereas forty years later, and to a new generation, who had not been eye-witness to the hardships and misery endured by the Israelites during their bondage in Egypt, it became needful to say: "And remember that thou wast a

servant in Egypt, &c., therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day." So that by resting on the sabbath-day from all their labours, the cause of that rest, namely, the mercies shown by the Lord to their fathers, might be ever present to their minds. Maimonides says,—“The sentence which we find in the repetition of the Decalogue by Moses, ‘that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou,’ (Deuteronomy v. 14,) is an explanation of that which precedes; ‘thou shalt do no work, nor thy ox, nor thy ass,’ &c.; thy cattle are to do no work, in order that thy servants may rest; for if the cattle are at all at work, thy servants cannot be at rest; as there is no species of labour which cattle can perform without human superintend-

ence; and thy man-servant and maid-servant are to rest, in order that they may, as well as thou, keep the day holy; and remember the cause why, on that day, they abstain from labour, namely, the deliverance and exit of the Israelites from Egypt; and as that fact was not mentioned in connection with the sabbath when the ten commandments were given to Israel at Sinai, this sentence forms no part of the decalogue in Exodus. (*Moreh Nevokim*, part ii., chap. 31.)

THE SIXTH VARIATION.

"HONOUR thy father and mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Exod. xx. 12.)

"Honour thy father and mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Deut. v. 16.)

The reason of the additional words introduced by Moses, appears to be the following: While in the desert, the wants of every one were supplied by the interposition of Providence, and the performance of filial duties could never cause any one to murmur; and as the life the Israelites there led was exempt from care and exertion, there can be no doubt but gratitude to their parents cost them no effort. But as they were now to enter into a settled state of society; as their wants were henceforth to be supplied by their own labour, and the penalty entailed by our first parent on all his race, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," was now to be exacted from them, it was possible that men might be found among them who would repine at the performance of these offices which filial duty prescribes, or who would refuse to devote any part of their labour to aid the waning strength of an aged parent. To such men, who might say, "Why should I honour my parents? What is the favour they have conferred on me? Am I to thank them that they have brought me into a world of sorrow and trouble?" To such men Moses says, "Honour them as the

Lord thy God hath commanded thee." Obedience to thy parents, to love and honour them, is thy sacred duty, which rests on the same authority as that of obeying the Lord, and to love and honour Him. And lest they should rejoin, "Of what value is the reward you offer us, that our days shall be prolonged, as the whole course of our existence is one continued series of toil, anxiety, disappointment, and vexation? And therefore the sooner our earthly pilgrimage is closed, the sooner shall we escape from the complicated ills by which it is attended;" Moses adds, "That it may go well with thee." Not only will the Divine blessing recompense thee, but thou wilt also possess the consciousness of having done thy duty; a consciousness which, amidst all the troubles that may befall thee, will cheer thy spirits and uphold thy fortitude, and without which it cannot go well with thee.

THE SEVENTH VARIATION.

"Thou shalt not bear עד שקר *lying* witness against thy neighbour." (Exodus xx. 16.)

"Neither shalt thou bear עד שוא *false* witness against thy neighbour." (Deut. v. 20.)

In the decalogue, at Mount Sinai, the expression is עד שקר, "lying witness;" in the repetition by Moses, it is עד שוא, "false witness."* Of these two expressions, the last is the more forcible. עד שקר "that which is not true" may be a compound of truth and lies: Whereas עד שוא, "that which is false," has no admixture of truth, but is altogether invention. The first is easily detected by an experienced judge, who, from the few real facts adduced, may be able to sift out the truth and to distinguish it from the lies that are added: But when the whole statement is a fabrication from beginning to end, it becomes next to impossible for the judge to discover the truth, as he has no clue whatever by which to guide

* This distinction is lost in the authorized English version, which renders both alike, "false witness."

his efforts to trace out the truth. The expression is varied in order to prevent the possibility of any abuse; for had the word been שָׁקֵר only, wicked men might have said, "It is true, we must not alter or enlarge on facts which really did occur; but it is nowhere prohibited to invent a statement which contains no particle of truth whatever." Or had the expression been שָׁוֶה only, they might have reasoned, "It is true that we must not fabricate a statement which is altogether untrue, but we are nowhere prohibited from distorting facts or colouring them so as to suit our purpose." Therefore Moses varied the form to meet both species of reasoning, and to leave no possible excuse to extenuate perjury or bearing false witness.

THE EIGHTH VARIATION.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant," &c. (Exod. xx. 17.)

"Thou shalt not desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house," &c. (Deut. v. 21.)

The difference here is in the words תַּחַבֵּר to covet and תַּתְּאוּה to desire. In the Decalogue, as delivered at Sinai, the first expression is used throughout to teach us that every species of property which the owners are not willing to part with, we are not to covet. Having laid down this general rule, Moses, in his repetition, makes a distinction between the wish to possess, which is voluntary and intentional, and the sudden desire, which springs up spontaneously, and is alike involuntary and unintentional. Therefore, he says, לֹא תַחַבֵּר, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, although the desire is involuntary." And תַּתְּאוּה לֹא

"Thou shalt not desire or long to possess thy neighbour's property of any kind, and ponder on the means of obtaining it." Shouldst thou ask, "Why does Holy Writ forbid a desire which is involuntary, as all men are open to temptation?" The answer is, This was done in order that men might not court temptation, but, on the contrary, by all means avoid being exposed thereto, which indeed is in the power of any man. Shouldst thou further ask, "If such is the case, why does not Holy Writ equally prohibit the spontaneous, involuntary, and unintentional desire to possess any part of our neighbour's goods and chattels, on the same grounds that man should avoid temptation?" Our answer is, In the latter case the crime is less in the involuntary desire to possess, than in the pondering on how to dispossess our neighbour. For, if we are struck with admiration for his house, we may build one exactly similar; if his oxen or asses excite our wishes, we may match them by thousands; and, therefore, when the involuntary desire for any part of his property arises within us, we may satisfy that desire without, in any way, injuring our neighbour, or depriving him of what is his. But if we lust for his wife, we can have no hopes of satisfying our desires without violating the laws of God, and inflicting on our neighbour the greatest of all possible injuries. Therefore, Holy Writ makes this great and wise distinction; and prohibits, in the one case, even the involuntary desire, which cannot be gratified without sin, while, in the other case, it is less severe against an involuntary desire, which may be gratified without sin; but directs the rigour of its prohibition principally against the premeditated design of dispossessing our neighbour of what is his.

(To be continued.)

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I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 104.)

R. AKEEBA said, "Laughter and levity accustom men to lewdness; tradition forms a fence to the law; tithes form a fence to riches; vows, a fence for abstinence; and the fence for wisdom is silence." (III. 17.)

COMMENTARY. *R. Akeeba said*—Having, in a preceding Mishna, made us acquainted with the particular offences which stamp the character of the infidel, our teacher now places before us, not only the primary causes which seduce men into the snares of infidelity, but also those salutary axioms, the perfect adherence to which will secure our virtue, and with it our happiness, here and hereafter.

Laughter and levity accustom men to lewdness—Our teacher does not here mean to forbid that cheerful disposition and innocent mirth, which, while it renders a man agreeable and pleasing to his fellow-men, is likewise the most sincere demonstration of gratitude towards his Creator; as it proves, that he has a due sense of the manifold mercies which the beneficent Creator has deigned to bestow on his creatures. On the contrary, wise as well as pious, our teacher perfectly well knew, that a sour and moody disposition, a look and bearing which appear to be indications of a discontented and desponding mind, do not besem the truly religious man, and are nowhere recommended in Holy Writ. For, throughout the Sacred Scriptures, hilarity, decent mirth, and the innocent joy of gratitude, are repeatedly enjoined. Thus we read, "Thou shalt rejoice on thy festivals:" (Deuteronomy xvi. 14.) And again: "Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, over all that thou bringest with thee."

(Deuteronomy xii. 19.) Again: "Thou shalt rejoice with thy household." (Deuteronomy xiv. 26.) And, "Thou shalt only be joyful." (Deuteronomy xvi. 15.) Here we have, not only the positive command, that joy is to be the prevailing sentiment of our hearts; but we are likewise told, that it is a due demonstration of gratitude: "Because the Lord thy God has blessed thee in thy harvests, and in all the works of thy hands." (Deuteronomy xvi. 15.) So that a gloomy look, and a desponding carriage, evince ingratitude towards the Supreme Benefactor, and are contrary to the Divine commands. Accordingly, we find, that the most distinguished characters of Holy Writ on every occasion declare their joyous gratitude, and the delight with which the goodness of God filled their souls: As David declares, "In Him our hearts rejoice, because we confide in His holy name." (Psalm xxxiii. 21.) And again: "Thou causest me to rejoice, O Lord, in thy deeds, and to exult in the work of thy hands;" (Psalm xcii. 5;) and numerous other instances, in which his heart, overflowing with gratitude, proclaims aloud its joy and rapture. Isaiah, likewise, when announcing to the house of Israel the glories of their future restoration, tells them, "Ye shall draw the waters of gladness from the fountain of salvation." (Isaiah xii. 3.) Again: "This is the Lord in whom we trust, we triumph and rejoice in his salvation."

(Isaiah xxv. 9.) And when he is in the fullest flow of his rapturous and inspired eloquence, he cannot find words more appropriate in which he may express the inmost sentiments of his heart than by exclaiming, "Greatly will I rejoice in the Lord; my soul will delight in God; for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, and has arrayed me in the mantle of righteousness." (Isaiah lvi. 10.) And that it is not in prosperity only, or when the manifold bounties of an all-merciful Creator are showered upon us, that we are to be steadfast in our confidence in the Lord and rejoice in His protection: But that in the hour of adversity, likewise, in the trying season of misfortune, and suffering, and distress, it is still our duty to preserve the same cheerful confidence in the goodness of God; we are taught by the prophet when he says, "Though the fig-tree bear no blossoms, the vines produce no fruit, and the fields give us no bread; although the sheep are cut off from the folds, and no cattle remain in the stable, still will I rejoice in the Lord, and triumph in the God of my salvation." (Habakkuk iii. 17, 18.)

Thus, then, we see, that the Sacred Scriptures, by positive command, by precept, and by the example of its most pious and distinguished characters, enjoin on us the duty of a cheerful confidence in God, of a joyous disposition, and of a mind contented with its situation, and open to the influence of innocent mirth. It cannot, therefore, be this joy and harmless hilarity against which our teacher intends to caution us, when he says, "Laughter and levity accustom men to lewdness." But he means that careless disposition, that indifference to every thing sacred and serious, on which Holy Writ fixes the seal of its reprobation, when it praises the man, "who sits not in the seat of the scoffer;" (Psalm i. 2;) and which the sage monarch describes when he says, "Even in laughter the heart grieves, and after joy comes sorrow." (Prov. xiv. 14.) It is the wild and boisterous joy of the thoughtless, the loud laughter of him who scorns on any occasion to repress his natural levity,

which our teacher reproves: And he does so very justly; for it is the joyous indifference to every serious reflection, the disposition to laugh at every thing which is not exactly as our own ideas suggest, that leads men on to become scoffers in matters of religion, presenting so many things which man cannot properly understand, and which it is far more easy to laugh at, than to endeavour to comprehend. And he who permits himself to turn faith, and the precepts of religion, into subjects for his witticisms, is already, in the example which he offers to others, and in the influence which that example may exercise, a confirmed infidel; and as his mocking laughter assails the sacred precepts of the law, their obligations cease to be binding upon him, and the sense of virtue and obedience to the Divine commands gives way to a lewdness of disposition, which, while it scorns every restraint, actually leads him to seek his chief enjoyment in doing what is wrong: As Solomon saith, "To the fool it is a joke to act presumptuously." (Proverbs x. 23.) And the habit of sinning becomes so confirmed in him, that, eventually, he comes under the designation of those who, having lost every sense of right, are by Solomon described as "delighting to do evil, and rejoicing in the perverseness of their wicked ways." (Proverbs ii. 14.) Our teacher, therefore, very properly puts us on our guard against giving way to a light and frivolous disposition, which, indulging in loud laughter and boisterous mirth, is not only very different in its manifestations from that tranquil joy which Holy Writ inculcates, but also directly opposite in its results: For while true joy chastens the heart and accompanies the feelings of gratitude and confidence which arise from a serious contemplation of the power and goodness of our Supreme Benefactor, levity or thoughtless joy, as it scorns every sober or virtuous reflection, makes room for, and is accompanied by, that lewdness of heart and mind which seeks all its happiness in the impure gratification of sensuality, and, more than any other vice,

enervates body and soul, and destroys man's hopes both here and hereafter.

Tradition forms a fence to the law—Of all the proofs that revealed religion can adduce in its favour the strongest is tradition, or the transmission from father to son, in uninterrupted succession of the narrative of certain events, witnessed and attested by those who were present when they occurred, and whose perfect agreement proves the truth of their relation. As the Divine Wisdom has given to all men one general revelation of the existence, omnipotence, and beneficence of the Deity, in the works of creation; it has also given a second more especial revelation of the attributes and will of the Deity, and of the fact, that He (blessed be He) is the Creator and Preserver of the universe, in the law of Moses. The first revelation rests on reason, the second on faith: The first is attested by ocular demonstration and argument, the second by the uninterrupted tradition descended to us from our fathers. The first grounds its arguments on the axiom, that nothing can come from nothing; that whatever is must have had a First Cause; that from the productions of that First Cause, the admirable order and foresight which reigns among them; and from the paternal care with which they are preserved, it is evident, that the First Cause, whom we call God, must be possessed of infinite duration, power, wisdom, and goodness. The second revelation assumes for its basis, the impossibility that six hundred thousand men, fathers of families, should conspire to hand over to their children an inheritance of falsehood, should declare, that they saw what they actually had not seen, or that they witnessed events which never occurred. But as the first revelation depends, for its development in the mind, on the exertions of human reason, which is finite, and of human understanding, which is liable to err; as, moreover, it acquaints man only with a general truth, but does not teach him what his duties are, or the purpose for which he is created;

the Divine Wisdom has from time to time vouchsafed to reveal its will through men, whose piety and purity of conduct and intention rendered them special partakers of the Divine favour, and raised them to the high and important trust of being teachers of the human race, and propounders of the Divine commands. Such men were not only Adam, the father of our race, but also Enoch and Noah. The history of creation, the wonders of paradise, the fatal disobedience of man, which caused his expulsion from that blessed abode, were the facts, the memory of which was preserved from father to son, in one branch at least of the family of Adam; namely, in that of Seth. Whereas the descendants of Cain who were careless of tradition, soon forgot the lessons of their progenitor and the effects of his disobedience, threw off the restraint which religion commands that man should impose on his desires, and eventually, infecting by the force of their evil example the purer descendants of Seth, caused such general corruption and misery to spread on earth, that the Creator, in mercy to his sinful creatures, put an end to the sufferings which they inflicted and endured, and buried in the waters of the flood a generation so irreclaimably perverse that they were alike incapable of penitence or amelioration. One family only escaped the universal desolation; the traditions of the fathers had been preserved in their integrity by the individuals composing that family. Destined to become the new progenitors of a new race, the Divine will and the duties prescribed to man, corresponding in their extreme simplicity with that primitive state of society, were revealed to them, and by them transmitted to their children, together with the traditions they had received from their fathers, and the awful exercise of Divine justice which they themselves had witnessed, and through his mercy only had survived.

But as men spread over the surface of the earth, as their increasing numbers rendered it needful that they should divide, and, abandoning

the homestead of their fathers, seek out new habitations and occupations, the traditions of their ancestors became first corrupted, and then lost. Instead of the worship of the one true God, the Creator and Preserver of the universe, who alone is entitled to the gratitude and adoration of man, the subordinate agents of nature were, by the wandering imaginations of men, exalted to Divine dignity; the passions and desires of men personified and represented by images, were honoured with Divine adoration; lust and cruelty, the inseparable companions of idolatry, were again spreading their unhallowed sway over the human race, when the Divine Mercy once more interposed, and that in a manner more effectual than had ever previously been done.

The traditions of Adam and Noah, transmitted through Shem to his grandson Eber, had by the latter been communicated to Abraham. Pure in thought and deed, firm in principle, and dauntless in action, gifted with the noblest of virtues and the greatest of talents, and ardently devoted to that God in whose cause he had not in his earliest years hesitated to expose his life, he became the chosen instrument of the Deity, destined to be the progenitor of an entire nation in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. At the Divine command he quitted his native land, traversed the greatest, most powerful, and most civilized states of the then known world, and, wherever he came, he proclaimed the name of the Lord, and, by example as well as by precept, taught mankind to worship the Most High and to obey His commandments.

In selecting Abraham and appointing him to be the father of many nations, the Deity made known to him, that amongst his children there was one, to whom, and to whose descendants, the promise and blessing of the Deity should particularly descend: "For in Isaac shall thy seed be called." (Genesis xxi. 12.) But it was likewise told to him, that these descendants, who were to be thus distinguished before the rest of his

children and mankind, should during centuries be in a state of foreign bondage and oppression, until the Lord should judge the nation which enslaved them. In this prediction the Deity unfolded to Abraham His beneficent intention respecting future generations, and the true meaning of the promise, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed: Namely, that the guardianship of the sacred traditions, and the knowledge of the Divine will, should no longer be confined to individuals only, whose influence, however great, could not naturally extend to all the nations of earth; but that an entire people should be appointed for that purpose, whose existence amidst all the vicissitudes of fortune should prove the omnipotence of the Deity, and whose laws and customs, faith and conduct, in good report as in evil report, while they were obedient to the Divine laws, or even when they disobeyed them, should prove to all the families of earth the truth of the sacred traditions, and place within their reach a knowledge of the Divine will, by which alone they could be blessed.

Such being the declared intention of the Supreme, the course of events corresponded with that intention. Abraham transmitted the valuable stores of tradition, and the commandments which the Deity had imparted to him, to Isaac his son, who again transmitted them to Jacob. To each of these patriarchs the Deity vouchsafed to reveal himself, in order to strengthen their faith. Jacob had twelve sons. Ten of them hated their younger brother, who was the favourite of their father, and they sold him into slavery. From a dungeon Joseph was raised to the highest dignity in Egypt. When famine compelled his brethren to seek food at the hands of Pharaoh's vice-gerent, he generously forgave their former ill treatment, and offered to them and their aged father an asylum, which they gladly accepted; and thus the chosen seed of Abraham became sojourners in the land of Egypt.

Joseph, his brethren, and the men of his generation, paid the debt of

nature. A new king arose, and the foretold period of slavery and oppression commenced. It is not for human reason or research to attempt to fathom the counsels of the Most High; but it would appear that the children of Israel were exposed to their sufferings in Egypt, and released in a manner supernatural and distinguished in the highest degree, in order that immediately on their first appearance on the stage of the world as a nation, the attention of all the inhabitants of earth might be called to this peculiar people, which, centuries before its actual existence, while yet its progenitor Abraham was childless, had been appointed to be teachers of the world and witnesses to the truth of the sacred traditions, which, even in the midst of the oppression and bondage to which the children of Israel had been exposed, they still preserved. The time for their deliverance approached; the wonders wrought by Moses in the presence of assembled millions are too well known to require repetition. The signal destruction of the tyrant Pharaoh and his host proved, that the power of the Deity extends alike to the heavens, and to the earth, to the sea, and all that they contain. The Israelites approached Mount Sinai, and here they were installed into their office as a nation of priests and teachers to the rest of mankind,—an office which has never since departed from them.

The Divine revelation which till then had only been afforded to single individuals, or, at most, as in the case of Noah and his sons, to a single family, was now vouchsafed to an entire people, accompanied with every circumstance, which could by visible demonstration and the evidence of the senses convince them, that they actually were in the immediate presence of the Deity, and that what they saw and heard was real, and no offspring of the fancy, or illusion of the imagination. Six hundred thousand men, besides women, children, and those retainers who were not of the seed of Abraham, forming together a body of more than three millions of human beings, saw the manifestation of the Divine presence,

and heard the laws which the Deity proclaimed. This was done in order that the joint evidence of all this numerous mass, comprising men of various ages, talents, and powers of observation, should prove sufficient to convince the sceptic, and to silence the doubts of the rest of the world: For, as it was not the Divine intention, in every or in any subsequent age, to renew this special revelation, or to alter and amend a code of laws which, proceeding from the fulness of Divine Perfection, could need neither alteration nor amendment, He, in his wisdom, caused the revelation on Mount Sinai to be such that the numerous eye-witnesses should be able to attest the fact in the most clear and satisfactory manner. And when the circumstances of that revelation, and the laws and precepts then enjoined, were written in a book, the observances to be practised in consequence of these laws and precepts were transmitted from father to son in uninterrupted succession: So that as the book corroborates the correctness of the observances, these again bear witness to the authority of the book: While the one and the other are supported by the concurrent evidence of three millions of eye-witnesses, whose testimony, handed over from father to son, forms that irresistible proof of tradition which infidels may carp at, but vainly strive to overthrow, or to innovate upon. And accordingly the sage and pious R. Joseph Albo says, in his valuable work, *Sepher Ikkarim*, (Division I. chap. 20,) “This is the cause why the whole of the law was not given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to be by them transmitted to their descendants; for that which is derived from individuals only, is liable, in the course of time, to become exposed to doubts, and eventually to be lost. And the law was consequently given with such perfect publicity as to command the testimony of a whole nation, in a manner that can leave no room for the least doubt on the minds of their descendants; for it is impossible to suppose that this whole nation should labour under the same erroneous impression, not to say mental aberration: Or should purposely combine to pass off

on their children, as facts,—and with the most minute detail of circumstances,—fables which had no existence, except in their deluded or deluding imaginations.” And he concludes his remarks on this subject with saying, “This nation produces six hundred thousand credible witnesses, whose evidence is conclusive to what they have seen, heard, and experienced by the demonstration of their senses, when they heard the voice of the Lord command the observance of the Decalogue: And on the strength of this conclusive evidence it must be believed, without doubt or hesitation of any kind, that this law of Moses is really and

truly revealed by the Deity.”* And as this conclusive and irresistible evidence is the same to every succeeding age, being handed over from father to son, so that there is no break in the link which unites us of the present day with the contemporaries of Moses, who went out of Egypt, and stood at Mount Sinai; and thence with Abraham, and Noah, and Adam; it is clear that this tradition of evidence forms a fence or barrier which upholds the authenticity of the law against the cavils of infidels, and protects its great precepts and observances against the crude reforms of innovators.

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. I., p. 53.

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: “BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:” BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 108.)

CHAPTER IX.

THE proofs taken from component parts of the general state of things are manifold. Those which relate to the superintendence of Providence, as extended to individual men, and taking cognizance of their various deeds, we divide into three classes. 1. The visible superintendence of Providence, when we see that men, who are cunning, bold, and persevering, use their utmost endeavours to injure some one or many of their fellow-creatures, and yet cannot succeed in accomplishing their designs; but sometimes, in spite of their utmost efforts, become instrumental in promoting the welfare of their intended victim; as happened to the brethren of Joseph: For the very means they adopted to insure his ruin became the first step towards his subsequent elevation. Thus, likewise, the means which Saul adopted in order to encompass the death of David, became instrumental to his glory and subsequent sovereignty: For Holy Writ tells us, that “Saul said in his heart, My hand shall not be on him; but let him fall through the hand of the Philistines.” (1 Sam. xvii. 18.) He consequently exposed him in frequent and mur-

derous combats against the Philistines, which became the means of making known to Israel the great valour and soldier-like qualities of David; his heroism, and the success with which his undertakings were crowned. These, and other similar instances, are evident proofs of the superintendence of Providence; particularly as we find it extended towards those who are feeble and unprotected, as the Sacred Singer says, “Who does justice to the oppressed.” (Psalm cxlvi. 7.) Our Rabbies relate that a, מַיִן, sceptic once said to R. Joshua “How mighty must that lamb be which can subsist in the midst of seventy wolves!” R. Joshua replied: “Mighty is the Shepherd, who cares for the preservation of the lamb!” The sceptic meant to say, if the seventy nations of earth were seriously bent on exterminating the Israelites, what could prevent them from accomplishing their purpose, as it is not the might or power of Israel that could offer any effectual resistance? To which the Rabbi replied, by pointing out the great power of Him whose superintending Providence has hitherto preserved them in all the many attempts made to annihilate them. 2. Another proof of the superintendence of Providence is furnished to us by

the ordinary course of human events ; as we see daily instances when cunning and evil-disposed men exert their utmost ingenuity to circumvent and injure men of feeble understanding, but cannot succeed in their designs, because their intended victims are protected, not by their own wisdom, but by the interposition of Providence : And therefore the Sacred Singer says, "The Lord is guardian of the simple." (Psalm cxvi. 6.) This proof is likewise adduced by Eliphaz in the course of his argument with Job, when he says, "He entraps the subtle in their cunning, and crushes the counsels of the perverse. In the day, darkness overcomes them, as if it were midnight ; they grope about at noon. He saves from the sword of their mouths the poor, and from the hand of the mighty, and is the hope of the poor." (Job v. 13—16.) This argument is approved of by the Most High, when, in his reproof of Job, he says, "Who deprives the wicked of their light." (Job xxxviii. 15.) The meaning is, Who prevents the wicked from attaining to the full success of their designs, which in Holy Writ is called, אור, "their light ;" and which, if Divine Providence did not superintend and take cognizance of terrestrial affairs, they would be sure to enjoy ; inasmuch as they adopt every needful means that can contribute to the prosperity of their designs, and should therefore be as fully successful as is the artist or mechanic, who, having employed the requisite preparations, and conducted his undertaking with due skill, produces exactly that which at the commencement of his labours he had planned to his mind's eye. But as, notwithstanding every care and precaution, and the most reckless use of any means that can promote success, the designs of the wicked not only are liable to miscarry, and even in some instances to produce a result directly the reverse of what the projector contemplated, but seldom, if ever, to reach that complete maturity, and plenary effect, which his plans had anticipated ; this forms one great proof that Providence does superintend and take cognizance of terrestrial events and human actions.

3. Another proof we find in the parity of punishment with which the wicked is visited, and which metes out to him measure for measure. For he who injures the property of his neighbour is punished in his own property ; he who mutilates or injures the person of his neighbour meets with a corresponding punishment in his own person. This accordance of the punishment to the crime we often meet with in Holy Writ. Thus the Egyptians afflicted the Israelites by the rigorous execution of the decree which consigned all male children to the waters of the Nile : They themselves met their condign punishment in the waters of the Red Sea. Thus, likewise, when Ahab, King of Israel, had caused Naboth to be unjustly accused and stoned to death, in order to seize on his vineyard, and the dogs licked the blood of the murdered man, the Prophet was sent to announce to the tyrant the punishment which afterwards he met : "On the same spot where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, there shall they likewise lick thy blood." (1 Kings xxi. 20.) And when David had sinned in the matter of Bathsheba, part of the Divine decree pronounced against him was, "I will take thy wives, and give them, before thine eyes, to thy neighbour," &c. (2 Sam. xii. 11.) The frequent recurrence of this retributive principle induced the sage Hillel to say to the skull which he saw floating on the waters : "Because thou didst drown another, thou wert drowned thyself ; and the end of those who drowned thee is, that they will likewise be drowned : " (Mishna, treatise *Aboth*, ii. 2 :) Meaning, thereby to express his perfect conviction of the superintendence exercised by the Divine Providence, which takes cognizance of men and of their actions, meting out to the evil-doer the measure of his punishment according to the measure of his crimes. Accordingly, the Prophet, in his prayer to the Lord, exclaims, "Great in counsel, and mighty in deed : Whose eyes are open over all the paths of the sons of man, to reward every one according to his own ways, and to the fruit of his own deeds." (Jer.

xxxii. 19.) He calls the Holy One (blessed be He!) great in counsel, because His infinite wisdom does so ordain events, and His impenetrable counsel does, from afar, regulate their effects, so that the evil-doer meets with the precise punishment apportioned to his crimes, and to the way in which he sinned. The Prophet likewise uses the word כִּדְרֵי, "according to his ways," in allusion to him who pursues an evil way, and uses his utmost endeavours to injure his neighbour, but does not succeed. Although his efforts have not prospered, and his neighbour escapes uninjured, yet, as the discomfiture of his evil designs was not owing to his relenting or desisting from his fell purpose, but solely to the superintendence of Divine Providence, which is exercised for the protection of the simple, and which saved his neighbour from becoming a victim to the injury intended, the Holy One punishes him for pursuing an evil way, although his bad designs did not take effect. And to show us that he who injures his neighbour out of carelessness and frivolity, without exactly preparing and maturing a fixed plan for that purpose, is likewise amenable to the Divine justice, he adds, "according to the fruit of his deeds;" to caution man, that whether his designs be firmly rooted, or merely adopted at the spur of the moment, he is alike responsible for the consequences. To this retributive justice of Providence, the Sacred Singer alludes, when he says, "It is known that the Lord does justice." (Psalm ix. 17.) Having previously said, "In the very net they spread, their feet were caught;" and subsequently, "By the work of his own hands the wicked is ensnared;" these facts prove that retributive justice proceeds from God; a sentiment which we often find repeated in the Psalms; as, "The wicked draw their swords, they bend their bows to slay the poor and distressed, to slaughter those whose ways are righteous: But their sword enters their own heart, and their bow is broken;" (Psalm xxxvii. 14, 15;) and many other similar instances. Our Rabbies discussed the subject, and even established the maxim, in

their commentary on Ecclesiastes iii. 16: "For God seeks out him that is persecuted:"—"The Deity always adopts the cause of the persecuted: If one righteous man persecutes another; if one wicked man persecutes another; if the wicked persecute the righteous; or even the righteous persecute the wicked; the Deity always adopts the cause of the persecuted. And accordingly we find that the prophet attests this to be the fact, when he says, 'Three-fold are the sins of Moab; but the fourth will I not forgive them; because they burned the bones of the king of Edom to ashes.' (Amos ii. 1.) The Lord does not dwell on the cruel treatment this king experienced because he was guiltless, but solely because he was persecuted." (*Medrash Rabbah*, chap. xxvii.) The prophets likewise mention the retributive justice of the Deity in many places. Thus Isaiah says, "God the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, said, In tranquillity and quiet is your salvation, in peace and confidence is your strength, but ye would not; and ye said, No, for on our horses, בָּנוֹס, we will rely; therefore תִּנְסוּן ye shall be fugitives: On fleet horses we will ride; therefore your pursuers will be fleet." (Isaiah xxx. 15.) So likewise says another prophet, Joel: "They threw lots over my people, and gave the males for food, and the maidens for wine, that they might drink." "Ye sold the children of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks that they might be far away from their own confines. But I will arouse them from the places whither ye have sold them, and will reward you on your own heads: For I will sell your sons and daughters through the hands of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them as captives to a far-distant nation." (Joel iv. 8, 11—13.) Our Rabbies likewise said, "The same measure that a man metes out to others, that same measure is meted out to him." These instances of retributive justice afford to the feeble-minded, and those whose faith is weak, heart-felt proofs of the Divine superintendence of Providence, and the cognizance it takes of human actions.

We must likewise not leave unnoticed the proof which Elihu adduces of the presentiments and warnings which men sometimes receive in their dreams respecting particular events: As he says, "In dreams and visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on them; and they slumber on their beds; then does he open the ears of men, chastises and affrights them: To turn man from his undertakings, to protect him from pride. He saves his soul from perdition, and his life from falling by the sword." (Job xxx. 15, 18.) The meaning is, that the warning voice of Providence startles him in his dreams, and points out the effects of his projected deeds, in order that he may turn away from those evil designs which his pride prompts him to harbour, and that he may reflect on the danger he incurs in this world, as well as in the next; and therefore he re-

peats, "He saves his soul from perdition," (in the world to come,) "and his life from falling by the sword," (in this world). Or it is possible that both may allude to the present life; the first part of the sentence being said in reference to a natural, and the second to an accidental, death. This forewarning, which sometimes is afforded to man in his dreams, is another and most pointed proof that the Divine Providence takes cognizance of men, not merely as component parts of a race or species, but as individuals, each having his distinct existence and purpose in the scale of creation; which superintending Providence does not appear to be extended to any of those animate beings who have no individual existence or purpose in creation, but simply form component parts of a species or race.

(To be continued.)

III. TALMUDIC ALLEGORIES.

(Continued from page 110.)

THE CONFORMATION OF MAN.

THE Creator descended; all the Angels, the Princes of the elements, beheld and contemplated his work.

He called to the dust. And dust gathered itself from all the quarters of the terrestrial globe. And the Angel of earth said, "This frame will be a mortal creature, wheresoever it dwells upon earth: For it is dust, and must return unto dust."

He called to the heavenly cloud; and it moistened the dust. The clay began to heave and shape itself into vessels and compartments. And the Angel of the waters exclaimed, "Thou wilt require nourishment, thou curiously constructed creature! Hunger and thirst will become inseparable from thy being." Inwardly the veins and cells began to be formed; the manifold outward limbs assumed their shape, and the Angel of the living said, "Thou wilt be subject to many desires, beauteous and scientific creation! Love of thy species will attract and impel thee!"

The Creator approached with his daughters, Wisdom and Love. With

paternal kindness He raised the inanimate clay, and breathed into it life and immortality. Man stood erect: Delighted, he looked around. "Behold!" said the voice of the Most High, "all the growth of the meadows and trees, all the animals that dwell upon earth, I have given to thee. Thy fatherland, the earth, is thine, and thou shalt rule it: But thou thyself art mine; thy breath is my gift, and when thy time cometh, I summon it unto myself!"

Wisdom and Love, the offsprings of God, stayed with the new lord of the earth. They instructed him and taught him to know animate and inanimate nature. They conversed with him as loving companions, and their light was with innocent man.

* * * * *

Man lives his allotted time on earth: Happy, if Wisdom and Love deign to cheer him with their influence. But when his allotted time expires, his body returns to mix with the elements whence it was taken; but the spirit returns again to God, by whose paternal embrace it was breathed into him.

THE TREES OF PARADISE.

LILIS AND EVE.

WHEN the Deity led man into his paradise, all the trees of the garden of Eden saluted the favoured of the Lord; with waving branches they offered him their fruits for his food, the fragrant shade of their boughs for his refreshment.

"O that he would prefer me!" said the palm-tree. "I will feed him with my golden dates, and the wine of my juice shall be his beverage. My leaves should form his tranquil hut, and my branches spread their shadow above him." "I will shower my odoriferous blossoms upon thee," exclaimed the apple-tree, "and my choicest fruits shall be thy nourishment."

Thus all the trees of paradise greeted their new-created lord; and his Supreme Benefactor permitted him to enjoy their rich offerings. Of all He gave him liberty to partake. One fruit only he was forbidden to taste,—that which grew on the TREE OF KNOWLEDGE.

"A tree of knowledge!" said man within himself. "All other trees yield me but terrestrial, corporeal nourishment; but this tree, which would elevate my spirit and strengthen the powers of my mind, this tree alone I am forbidden to enjoy." Yet he silenced the voice of desire, and suppressed the rebellious thoughts which arose in his bosom. But when the voice and example of temptation assailed him, he tasted the pernicious fruit, the juice of which still ferments in our hearts.

* * * * *

"Hard is the prohibition which is laid upon man," said the angelic spirits of heaven; "for what can be more tempting to a being who is gifted with reason, than the acquisition of knowledge? And shall he, who soon will transgress the command, therefore be punished with death?"

"Wait and behold his punishment," replied the dulcet voice of celestial love, "even on the path of his errors, amidst the pangs of repentance, and the stings of remorse,—even there will I be his guide, and conduct him to another tree, that grows in his heavenly home."

SOLITARY and silent, Adam traversed his paradise. He had tended the trees, had given names to the animals, rejoiced in the rich fulness of blessing which creation every where unfolded; but, amidst all animate beings, he found none which could share with him the wishes of his heart. At last his eye remained fixed on one of those beauteous creations of air, which, as tradition informs us, inhabited the earth before man was called into being, and which his clearer sight could then still distinguish. LILIS was the name of this beauteous being, who, like her sister, dwelt on trees and flowers, and fed only on the most aromatic fragrance. "All creatures," said Adam, within himself, "live in social community with each other: I only stand alone! O that this beauteous creature might become my companion!"

The Eternal heard his wish, and said, "Thou hast cast thine eye on a form which is not created for thee: Yet, in order, to instruct thee by correcting thine error, thy wish shall be granted." The command of transformation was given, and LILIS assumed human limbs.

Joyfully Adam hastened towards her; but soon he discovered his error. The beauteous LILIS was proud, and disdainfully withdrew from his embrace. "Am I," she exclaimed, "of the same origin as thou art? I am formed out of the pure air of heaven, not from the lowly dust of the earth. My life lasts thousands of years: The might of spirits is my strength, and fragrant odours my celestial sustenance. I will not join thee to increase thy lowly dust-begotten race." She flew away, and refused to return to him.

And the Creator said, "It is not well that man should be alone. I will give him a mate, who shall be proper for him." A deep sleep settled on Adam's limbs, and a prophetic dream showed him the new creation. It arose from out of his side; formed of the same essence as he was. Joyfully he awoke, and beheld his second self. And when,

the beneficent Creator led the lovely being to him, his heart heaved and yearned towards her; for her essence had been near to his heart. "Thou art mine," he rapturously exclaimed, "thou shalt be called WOMAN, for thou art taken from man."

* * * * *

When the Lord loves a man, he gives him the mate who is his, formed for him out of his own heart, and she becomes his wife. Sensible that they were created for each other, they become one in daily-renewed

contentment, and the happiness of sympathetic union. But he who desires the possession of outward charms only, and longs for a being that appertains not to him, is punished by obtaining a mate who is not his, nor formed out of his own heart. Thus the two souls forced into one by a compulsive union, and soon sensible that they were not created for each other, indulge in mutual hatred, and torment one another till separated by death.

(*To be continued.*)

IV. COMMENTARIES ON HOLY WRIT.

THE VARIATIONS IN THE DECALOGUE,

Exodus xx. 1-17, and Deuteronomy v. 6-21.

From the *בכורי העתים* for 5588 (1824) page 88.

(*Concluded from page 112.*)

THE NINTH VARIATION.

THE TENTH VARIATION.

"THOU shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife," &c. (Exodus xx. 17.)

"Thou shalt not desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet his house," &c. (Deut. v. 21.)

In the ten commandments, as delivered from Mount Sinai, the house is mentioned first, and the wife next. Whereas, in the repetition by Moses, the wife takes precedence of the house. The different degrees of importance attached to the wife, and to the house, in these two passages, are explained by the situation of the children of Israel in the desert where houses were possessed only by the most wealthy, as we read, "The earth opened and swallowed Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their houses." (Numbers xvi. 32.) Therefore, the comforts a house was supposed to yield, were coveted in a higher degree by the multitude than the enjoyment of female charms. Whereas, now that the Israelites were about to conquer the promised land, replete with large cities, and houses filled with every good, these ceased to be objects of superior attraction, and resumed their place among other objects of property.

THE words, "his field," are added in Deuteronomy v. 21, as part of the property of our neighbour, which we are not to covet. As the Israelites were not possessed of any fields in the desert, it was needless to mention it among their possessions. But as they were now to possess a land to be divided among them by lot, and one might obtain a better field than another, the addition of these words became necessary.

The great distinction which pervades the Decalogue as commanded at Sinai, and its repetition by Moses as narrated in Deuteronomy, is, that the former was directed to the dwellers in the desert, who lived upon manna; whereas the latter was directed to those who were to conquer and possess the promised land, and to their descendants. Should the question, however, be raised, "When the Israelites were at Mount Sinai, their forty years' sojourn in the desert had not then been decreed against them; so that, if they had not sinned in the matter of the spies, they would at once have entered on possession of the promised land, and the miraculous supply of manna would then have ceased. And as such is the case, (that, but for their subsequent sin, the generation who witnessed the

Divine revelation at Sinai would not have made any prolonged stay in the desert,) where is the difference between those who heard the ten commandments as originally enjoined, and those who heard them as repeated by Moses? as both were in the desert, and in the hope of speedily possessing the promised land." To this I reply that the ten commandments, were repeated by Moses after his victories over Sihon and Og, and the conquest of their kingdoms; which in itself made a wide distinction between two generations, one of which already in part possessed what the other only expected, and which rendered necessary the introduction of words like "thine ox, thine ass," and "his field," with some others, upon which we have commented. Moreover, it was the evident intention of Moses to tranquillize the minds of the Israelites, to ease them from their fears of a longer delay in their promised conquests, and to impress them with the conviction that they were far nearer the end of their wanderings than their fathers had been forty years before.

By these explanations of the variations which we find in the decalogue, our wish has principally been to prove how much it is to be preferred, in an attempt to comment on Holy Writ, to be guided by the simple and obvious meaning of the words of Scripture, rather than assign to them any mystical, symbolical, or typical sense; the indulging in which is the common failing of most of the learned in these latter days. These men are so fond of bewildering their readers or hearers in the mazes of mystification, and the esoteric meanings of pretended allegories and symbols, that one is tempted to suppose their intention is to deny that Holy Writ has any simple or literal meaning, and to assert that it is impossible, without the key afforded by their interpretation, to penetrate into the secret and hidden meaning of the Sacred Scriptures. Such is the contempt with which they look down on him who adheres to the simple sense of the letter, which they assert is only fit for the ignorant; although our

great teachers of the olden time, the sages of the Mishna, and of the Talmud, told us and taught us, that no passage in Scripture is to be perverted from its literal meaning.

Should the question arise, "How has this evil crept in among us, and how comes it that the generality of those who profess to be learned in the law should have abandoned the path of sound sense and reason, renouncing the plain and literal signification of Scripture, and substituting fanciful expositions misdirect us into the labyrinth of their mystical subtleties?" the answer is plain and obvious: It is pride and ambition in most of these pretended teachers, and hypocrisy in some, which is the cause of their aberrations and departures from the high road of reason and understanding, and of their diverging into the by-paths of error and fancy. The simple construction of which the literal meaning of Scripture admits, is but one; for truth is only one. Its latitude is circumscribed; there is no room for digressing to the right hand or to the left. Whosoever aims steadily at discovering the truth, will fix on the precise point; and whosoever diverges from that point is wrong. Now, there can be nothing more unpleasant to a haughty and ambitious man, than to be told continually and every day, by those to whom he condescendingly professes to impart his superior wisdom, "You are wrong! You are wrong! What you assert is not true!" And to continue in the beaten track of common sense does not satisfy their high-flown aspirations. While the fawning hypocrites who assent to whatever is told them,—be it right or wrong, founded in reason, and the doctrines of our Rabbies, or not,—these flatterers cannot be expected to adhere to literal meaning, or strict truth, which would compel them, either to point out to him who is in error, the mistaken reasoning by which he is influenced; or else, to their own disgrace and discomfiture, join him in his erroneous opinions. Therefore, they prefer to enlarge the narrow path of truth; and, accordingly, the road they have chosen unto themselves is wide and

boundless like the ocean: For, when once truth is departed from and lost sight of, fiction knows no limits. You may therefore enter into an assembly of these sage professors, and hear them expound or comment on any given passage of Holy Writ. Each one opens wide his lips, and unfolds his views and fancies. One says one thing; another says another. The one in his explanations goes to the north, ano-

ther to the south; one explores the east, and another the west: And yet they are all wise, all learned, all ripe of understanding! not one of them is in the wrong, but whatever they advance is true!

Who can gainsay the great advantage such men derive from substituting the mysterious jargon of symbol or type, for the plain sense of literal interpretation?

V. THE JEWISH KINGDOM OF THE CHASARS, AND THE BOOK COSRI.

THE Chasars (Kosars or Cozars) are a branch of the ancient Turks. Their descent, according to some, is from Japhet; and Thogarma is named as their progenitor. In the earliest times they dwelt at the western side of the Caspian, and extended their dominions unto the Black Sea. Attila subjugated them; and for a time they formed part of the empire of the Huns. They then were under the domination of the Bulgarians, but threw off the yoke, and eventually became so mighty, that they were alike the terror of the Greek and Persian empires. The celebrated king of Persia, Chosroes, or Nushirivan, was compelled, in order to secure his territories against their irruptions, to build an immense wall, the remains of which excite astonishment even to the present day;* and the emperors of Constantinople courted their friendship. They often bought the protection of the valiant Chasars; even entered into matrimonial alliances with their chakans, or kings; and Chasar warriors formed the body-guard of the Greek emperors. The rapid progress which they made in civilization, and their great prosperity, soon formed this people of nomades into a well-regulated state, which maintained itself successfully against the caliphs and other eastern conquerors. The principal seat of their monarchy was Belangiar, at the mouth of the Wolga. But numerous other fortified cities proved the advanced state

of society among the Chasars, and their wealth and prosperous condition.

Navigation, greatly favoured by their geographical position between two seas, and two large rivers, (the Wolga and Don,) enabled them to carry on an extensive commerce; from which, as long as the Chasars remained in a state of barbarism, the Greek and Persian merchants derived the greatest advantage; but which soon raised their cities to a most flourishing state; and, enriched by conquest, as well as by trade, these cities became the seats of the chakans' royalty and splendour, inferior in nothing to that of the caliphs. Victorious on the north and on the south, the Chasars drew gold and silver from civilized countries, and raw materials from the savages of the north: Thus, for instance, the tribute which they exacted from the conquered Sclavonians consisted in squirrel-skins, which they dressed and used as garments. Thus the Chasars became rich and powerful; and they seem to have been instrumental in promoting and spreading a certain degree of mental cultivation. Jews, Christians, and Mahometans settled in the country of the Chasars: All were equally well received, and lived peacefully together. This last circumstance proves how extensive commerce and social intercourse must have been among the Chasars; since it is the constant trading intercourse between nations that promotes reciprocal good-will, and an exchange of ideas: Whilst, on the contrary, nations, who ex-

* KARAMSIN, *History of the Russian Empire*, I. 34, 35; DE GUIGNES, *Histoire des Huns*, T. II, p. II. 507—9.

clude strangers, and, living alone, have no intercourse with others, do not attain to so rapid an intellectual progress. There can be no doubt that the chakans took notice of these strangers, and reflected on their religious differences. It seems that these monarchs delighted in the society of strangers, who were advanced far beyond their own subjects in all the pleasant arts of peace; and there is reason to believe that the chakans often found occasion to avail themselves of the services of these foreigners, in the conducting of their affairs at the court of the caliphs, of the Greek emperors, or of the kings of Persia. And doubtless the desire to make proselytes to their respective creeds was likewise a means of frequently making the illiterate Chasars acquainted with the polemical contests at that time carried on with equal ardour by Jews, Christians, and Mahometans: So that the reflecting among the Chasars could not but pay some attention to the important fact, that these strangers, however far advanced in civilization, however peaceably pursuing their respective avocations, and even uniting in amity and perfect agreement to accomplish some undertakings of general usefulness, were yet at variance, and even at enmity, concerning that which each of them considered as most vitally essential.

Under these circumstances it is not so incredible as some historians assert, that the Jewish religion should have ascended the throne of the Chasars; a fact related by most of the old Jewish historians. Bulan, or Bula, king of the Chasars, in the year 740 of the Christian era, embraced Judaism, of his own accord, and from free choice, and introduced the law which rendered that faith imperative on all future chakans. The manner of his conversion is singular; and, as related, carries with it a great deal of the wonderful, mixed up with much common sense. It is said that this king, who was wise, learned, and pious, paid particular attention to the religious arguments and disputations which were often carried on in his presence, between Jews, Christians, and Maho-

metans. A dream, or nocturnal vision, frequently repeated, had cautioned him, "that his *intentions* were acceptable to the Deity; but that his *works* were not acceptable." From this he inferred, that, as his intention was to worship the only true God, (which intention was acceptable,) it must be the method of his worship which was improper, and therefore not acceptable; and that therefore it became his duty to embrace one of the three systems of religion, the respective dogmas of which were so often discussed in his presence. Uncertain which of the three to prefer, he adopted an ingenious expedient to arrive at the true estimation in which the disputants held the respective systems of their opponents. He asked the Christian, which of the two religions, Jewish or Mahometan, he would embrace, if it had been his fortune to be unacquainted with the Christian faith. The reply he received was, "The Jewish religion, undoubtedly, as that had been actually instituted by the Deity, although but for a time, and to be superseded by the more perfect Christian dispensation." He next put a similar question to a Mahometan; who also replied, that, "if not a believer in the doctrines of the Koran, he would be a Jew, as the Jewish religion had actually been instituted by the Deity, to teach mankind the unity of God,—a truth which Mahomet, the last and greatest of the prophets, was sent to confirm and enforce." We are not told whether the king put the question likewise to the Jew; nor his answer; but the king declared, that as the Jew and the Christian united in giving the preference to the Jewish above the Mahometan religion; and as the Jew and Mahometan united in giving the preference to the Jewish above the Christian faith; whilst, on the contrary, the Christian and the Mahometan stood each alone in asserting the superiority of his own creed, he should prefer that system which united in its favour the greatest number of suffrages. He accordingly solicited and obtained the instructions of an eminent Rabbi, and in course of time embraced the Jewish religion, receiving at his cir-

cumcision the name of Joseph ; and, as the monarchy was elective, he made it a fundamental law, that no king should be chosen who was not a professor of the Jewish religion. A series of Jewish kings governed the Chasars during two centuries and a half, but without the general toleration or freedom of conscience being in the least restricted : (A remarkable fact, which affords a proof at once of the genuine good sense of king Bulan-Joseph, and the true piety of his teachers.) It is said, that each king entertained a second chakan, who resided in the palace, but did not interfere in the affairs of state or government. This personage was doubtless a chacham, or representative of the Palestine and Babylonian Jews, whose chief occupation was the study of Jewish theology and jurisprudence, in order to assist the king in the decision of intricate questions of law, whenever his opinion was required. It is also said, that in times of adversity, the people imputed their sufferings to this chacham, and prevailed on the king, either to put him to death, or to dismiss him. This, however, is as uncertain as is another tale, according to which, the chiefs of the nation, at the close of every new election of a king, put a silken cord round the neck of their newly chosen sovereign, and almost throttling him, inquired how long he intended to reign ? His answer was then recorded, and he was not permitted to exceed the period he himself had named ; for if he survived that period the chiefs put him to death. But the manner in which this tale is narrated by the Arabic historian, Ibn Haukal, is so contrary to common sense, that we may justly doubt the whole story : For, if the new-elected king was free to name any period he pleased, knowing that his life was forfeited at the expiration of the time he himself had fixed, he would probably take care to appoint a period so distant, that his chiefs would scarcely have occasion to undertake the task of removing him. On the contrary, it appears, that the highest veneration was paid to the king. He seldom quitted his palace, and seldom received

visitors. Access to him was only to be obtained on matters of the first importance ; and whosoever came into his presence was obliged to fall prostrate on his face, (as before the kings of Persia, the caliphs and the emperors of Constantinople,) and remain in that posture until permission to rise was given. No one was permitted to pass a royal tomb on horseback ; but whoever passed was obliged to dismount, bow to the grave, and continue on foot until he was out of sight of the royal monument. The power of the king was so absolute, that if he said to any of his great officers of state, "Go and die," that officer immediately went home to his house, and put an end to his own life. As supreme judge of the land the king was assisted by a council of nine, to which Jews, Christians, Mahometans, and Pagans were equally admissible.

The Chasars, who at the time of king Bulan-Joseph were Pagans, gradually embraced one of the three religious systems. The majority became Christians or Mahometans ; the number of Jews was less considerable. About one century after the conversion of Bulan, the Christian religion was general among the Chasars, although the kings still were of the Jewish faith ; nor did these in any way interfere with the religious freedom of their subjects. This state of things continued until about the year 1000, when the monarchy was subverted, and the country conquered by the Slavi.

The existence of this Jewish monarchy of the Chasars made little impression on the oriental Jews, who often visited the country, and found, that those kings were too much occupied with their own pleasures and interests to evince any active sympathy for the sufferings of their brethren, or any real desire to improve their condition in the states to which their influence might have extended. Much greater was the sensation which the tidings of such a kingdom produced among the Jews of Spain, where, at that time, the learned Rabbies began to shine as royal favourites at the court of Toledo. R. Hasdai, the son of

Isaac, was held in high estimation by Abdorrahmen, Moorish king of Cordova, who assumed the title of Emir al Moumenin, "chief of the faithful," and contributed greatly to the rise and progress of learning in Spain, and by his successors Al-Hakem and Hascham, who had inherited his love of science. R. Hasdai had heard something of the Jewish kings of the Chasars, and determined to obtain more full information, in order thereby to raise the repute of his brethren. He, therefore, wrote a letter to the then reigning king of the Chasars, (about the year 860,) from the contents* of which we will offer a few extracts, not doubting but that a document so ancient, and so curious, may be of some interest to our readers.

The introduction is in rhyme, and contains a well-turned compliment in the Hebrew-Arabic style, by which the writer salutes the king of the Chasars. He then continues:—

"That he, Hasdai, the son of Isaac, the son of Ezra, of the Jewish community, presents his most humble respects to the mighty king of the Chasars, rejoices at his greatness, and prays for his welfare. That he feels himself too mean to address so glorious a monarch, but, nevertheless, presumes to write to him, as he (the writer) had the high honour of being near the person of the great, mighty, and glorious king of Cordova; and was most anxious to obtain certain information respecting the existence of a Jewish monarchy, which would greatly tend to the comfort of his brethren, and raise them in the public estimation."

After giving a detailed account of the geographical position of Cordova, and a mathematical calculation of the distance between Spain, and the land of the Chasars, he continues:—

* *Michtab*, R. Chasdai ben Isaac, *menuchatho cabod lemelech Alchosar*, apud Buxtorf. *Intr. in libr. Cosri.*

"The great distance between the two countries was, doubtless, the cause why so little was known in Spain respecting the Chasarian monarchy; although a report was in circulation, that some learned Spanish Jews, particularly R. Juda ben Meir, and R. Joseph, had visited the court of the great chagan and been the happy and admiring witnesses of his might and splendour. That he greatly desires to enjoy the same happiness, although he serves a king, who is the greatest of the caliphs, being the sovereign of the rich and fruitful peninsula of Spain, (of which he adds a short statistical account,) whose favour and alliance was courted by many other kings. That the office which he (Hasdai) held at the court of this great king made it his duty to receive all the foreign ambassadors who delivered to him the presents they brought to his master, and received from him the presents which, in return, were sent to their respective sovereigns. That he had availed himself of every opportunity to question the ambassadors from far distant lands, respecting the kings of the Chasars, but had received no satisfactory reply. That some merchants from Chorasán had given him some intelligence on the subject, but their statement had appeared to him incredible, and made for a selfish purpose. But that the ambassadors of the emperor of Constantinople had assured him, that a Jewish monarchy actually did exist in Chasaria, and had added, that though by land many nations intervened between the land of the Chasars, and the dominions of the Greek emperor, a near connexion subsisted between both by sea. That the Chasars brought fish, skins, and other articles, to Constantinople; that an active trade was there carried on with them; and that their present chagan or ruler was named Joseph."

(To be continued.)

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VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 118.)

R. AKEEBA said, "Laughter and levity accustom men to lewdness ; tradition forms a fence to the law ; tithes form a fence to riches ; vows, a fence for abstinence ; and the fence for wisdom is silence." (III. 17.)

COMMENTARY. *Tithes form a fence to riches*—Our teacher here gives us a most important lesson, the due observance of which will be found greatly to influence the happiness of man, which flows from a contented disposition, and is founded on the conscious performance of duty. By the word מעשרות, "tithes," our teacher does not only mean those oblations which man contributes, towards upholding the outward dignity of religious worship, and to the subsistence of its ministers, but, generally whatever portion of his wealth or earnings he devotes to pious and charitable purposes. According to the institutions of the law, the כהן or "priest," was not permitted to have or exercise any other means of subsistence than what he derived from his sacred office : As Holy Writ expressly declares, when enumerating the sources of revenue by means of which the priests were to subsist, "And the Lord said to Aaron, In their land thou shalt have no possession, nor shalt thou have any portion amongst them ; for I am thy portion and thy inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel." (Numbers xviii. 20.) The Levites, to whose tribe the sacerdotal family appertained, had likewise no portion or territorial inheritance assigned to them : As it is said, "They shall possess no inheritance among the children of Israel." (Numbers xviii. 29.) The tithe or tenth part of the pro-

duce of a field or vineyard, which was assigned to them, and of which they again allowed a tithe to the sacerdotal family of Aaron, could not be considered, either by the Law, or by the Israelites who obeyed that Law, as a charitable gift ; but was rather looked upon as an equitable compensation due to the Levites in lieu of that fixed portion of the conquered land, to which, as one of the tribes of Israel, they were as fully entitled as any of their brethren. But though they surrendered this portion at the command of the Deity, and preferred to devote themselves to the service of God for which they were set apart, it was with an expressed and acknowledged claim on the justice and fairness of their brethren, the Israelites. These could not but remember, that the portion of territory which ought to have belonged to the Levites, had enlarged the respective lots of all the other tribes into which it merged ; so that, in fact, every family in Israel had, as a consequence of the renunciation of the Levites, received a larger inheritance than otherwise they would have been entitled to : They were, therefore, in justice bound to consider that a proportion of the inheritances they respectively possessed was held in trust for the Levite, who, devoting the whole of his time to the service of the Deity, would not have been able properly to cultivate his inheritance had he taken

a portion amongst the rest of his brethren. Accordingly we find that whenever Holy Writ urges the claims of the Levite, care is always taken to remind the Israelites "that he has no portion or inheritance" with them; and that, therefore, the share they gave him in the produce of their soil was not a charitable gift, but a debt they owed, being the fruits of that part of their inheritance which would have been his, had he taken the integral part of the conquered land, to which his tribe was entitled.

It is, therefore, not only this equitable allowance made to the priests and Levites, as a compensation in lieu of real property which they surrendered, which our teacher designates by the word מעשרות, "tithes;" for this could not be considered as a fence to riches, inasmuch as, though in the possession of the different families of Israel who shared the land between them, it never ceased to be the actual property of the Levites, as a rent-charge due to them for the share or portion they had surrendered: But he also includes under that designation those other gifts and oblations mentioned in the law, (Deut. xiv. 22, 23,) one part of which is to be freely shared with the Levite, while the other part is to be the absolute property of the stranger, the widow, and the orphan. He also comprises under the same name those loans and gifts which Holy Writ so repeatedly enjoins us cheerfully to bestow on our poorer brethren. And it is to impress on our minds, that as the tithe paid to the Levite is actually the produce of that portion of inheritance which is held in trust for him; and of which, without absolute and palpable injustice, the possessor has no right to deprive him; so likewise the property which it pleases an all-merciful God to bestow on us, is also held in trust to be disposed of according to His will and commands: We being but His stewards, and bound to apply our possessions in conformity to His commandment. "For the poor will never cease from being in the land; therefore I command thee, and say, Thou shalt surely open thy hand to thy

brother, thy distressed, and thy poor in thy land." (Deut. xv. 11.) Having previously enjoined on us the duty of charity, by saying, נתון תתן לו, "Thou shalt surely give to him," (and which our Rabbies comment on by saying, "Even hundreds of times,) the Sacred Scriptures state the reasons which give the poor a claim on our assistance. He is our brother; gifted with feelings, subject to wants, similar to our own; he is poor and distressed, and therefore without the means of satisfying those wants, the urgency of which, from the community of our nature with his, we are capable of appreciating; he dwells in our land, is subject to the same laws, and obeys the same social compact to which we are indebted for the undisturbed and secure possession and enjoyment of our property, and which, in return for his obedience, is bound to provide him with the means of existence; and as it is not to be expected but that some one will advance these claims to our beneficence, the Deity, from whom flows every good, reminds us, that what we have is His (as David declares, "For all is from thee, and from what is thine we give to thee;" 1 Chron. xxix. 14); that we are but the dispensers of his bounty when we permit others to partake in the blessings he has bestowed on us; and therefore, in the plenitude of his right, He says, "I command thee, and say, Thou shalt surely open thy hand," &c.

Thus we find that all the various gifts and oblations which men offer either for pious or charitable purposes are all included under the denomination of "tithes," respecting which our teacher truly says, "that they form a fence to riches;" this they do in a double sense; as in the first instance they protect our wealth, and, secondly, they protect us from entertaining an inordinate thirst for riches. In the first sense we find prosperity and the blessing of heaven promised to him who is charitable, and acquits himself of the demands which religious worship and his fellow-men have upon him: As it is written, "Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest; for on

account of this thing the Lord thy God will bless thee in all thy works and in all thy undertakings." (Deut. xv. 10.) Here we find that the blessing of heaven is the promised reward of charity. And Solomon also says, "He who is merciful to the poor lendeth to the Lord, who will repay him his full reward." (Prov. xix. 17.) The prophet, exhorting the Israelites to be faithful to the Lord, and sincerely obedient to his commands, declares, "Bring the whole tithe into the granary, that there may be food in my house; and put ye me to the test in this matter, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open unto you the valves of heaven, and pour down on you the boundless fulness of my blessing." (Mal. iii. 10.) And as the Divine benediction is thus secured to him who is a faithful steward of the Divine bounty, the dispensation of which has been entrusted to him, our Rabbies, commenting on the words of Holy Writ, עשר תעשר, "Thou shalt surely pay a tithe of all the growth of thy seed," &c. (Deut. xiv. 22,) say, עשר "Thou shalt pay a tithe in order that thou mayest become wealthy through the Divine blessing, which protects thee and rewards thee for the performance of thy duties." In this sense our Teacher says, that מעשרות or "tithes," in the enlarged meaning which he assigns to the word, are a fence or protection to our present havings, as the blessing of heaven becomes the guardian of our prosperity.

But, in the second and more important sense, the feeling of rectitude and benevolence which is engendered in our minds by the constant performance of our duties and the conviction that whatever we possess is bestowed on us by a beneficent Creator, not as means of pandering to vicious desires, luxury or selfish indulgence, but as a trust for the proper use of which we are responsible; this feeling of rectitude and benevolence, while it chastens our minds, will raise us above any temptation to injure our neighbour, or to deprive him of that with which Providence has blessed him. It will enable us to contemplate the vicissitudes of fortune with calmness, and

in the hour of adversity to exclaim with Job, "The Lord has given, the Lord has taken, blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job i. 21.) And as we then truly estimate whatever gifts the Deity is pleased to confide to us, as a loan, which in his own good time He has the right to call in, either wholly or in part, our soul becomes weaned from the inordinate desire for wealth; we are satisfied in a state of mediocrity, happy if we are above direct want, and supremely blest when we can share our mite with those whose pittance is still smaller than our own. This middling state—the state of true happiness on earth,—is invoked by the inspired Sage, when he says, "Let not, my portion be either poverty or riches; but grant me my daily bread." (Proverbs xxx. 8.) This contented disposition, which will teach us to appreciate the bounty of the Supreme, in whatever measure it is meted out to us, purifies our mind, and renders our soul worthy of the eternal bliss which the gracious justice of the Lord awards to him who honours God, and loves his fellow-creatures; and thus מעשרות, "tithes," in that true sense of the word in which our author applies it, become a fence not only to the transient riches of this world, but also to the imperishable treasures of a future and better existence.

Vows a fence for abstinence—Our teacher here alludes to the truly pious man, who prudently keeps within the line traced out by the law, and even altogether abstains from, or but moderately partakes of, those enjoyments which the law has not prohibited; lest, by freely indulging in these enjoyments, desires may arise too powerful to be withstood, without that painful and arduous struggle which unhinges the harmony and equanimity of the soul, and produces a soreness on the mind which even the feeling of victorious exultation at having overcome the temptation, and triumphantly withstood the assault of the passions, cannot altogether allay or remove. The man who, out of fear that he may not keep within the bounds of enjoyment permitted by

the law, determines to abstain from certain indulgences which, in themselves are lawful, will find that his desires continually urge him on, to enjoy that from which his prudent fears teach him to [abstain : The arguments they use are, "Why shouldst thou be coward enough to impose on thyself restraints beyond those which the law ordains? Behold thy neighbours, who, though not better than thou, yet are much wiser, and do not permit groundless fears to narrow the circle of enjoyments which the law leaves open to them : Why, then, shouldst thou fear to follow their example ? Besides, this is only a whim on thy part, when thou comest to thy proper senses thou wilt laugh at thine own folly, and ridicule thy groundless fears." When a man finds that the fiend is busy at his heart, and that the insidious whisper of temptation tries to bewilder his better judgment, he may rest assured that the prudent fear which first induced him to restrain his appetites, and to submit to total abstinence rather than expose himself to sin, is proper and well-founded : As the very urgency of his passions, which assail him while yet far from overstepping the limit traced out by the law, would become still more powerful, and even irresistible, when he approaches that limit so near, that one small step further will place him beyond it. When exposed to such an inward mental conflict, man is apt to have recourse to a vow in order to strengthen his resolution, and to render that imperative and binding which, till then, was merely voluntary and dependent on his own inclination. And in this sense our teacher uses the expression, that "vows are a fence to abstinence;" inasmuch as a man is fenced in, and restricted by, his vow; for by the Divine law the performance of any vow becomes imperative; and he who breaks what his lips have uttered, becomes guilty of a positive transgression. Our Rabbies, however, were not (in general) friendly to vows of abstinence, which caused an addition to the prohibitions of the law. They, therefore, say, commenting on the words of Holy Writ, "And the priest shall make an atonement for him

for the sin he has committed;" (Numbers vi. 11;) "If a Nazarite, who abstained from wine only, required an atonement, how much greater does he require who refuses the free gift of Providence by abstaining from that which the Deity permits him to enjoy?" They, therefore, recommend that man is to abstain from that which is actually prohibited in the law, but is not by oath or vow to deprive himself of those enjoyments which the law sanctions. They say, "Is it not sufficient for thee to abstain from that which the law prohibits? But will thou, of thine own accord, prohibit thyself from that which the law permits?" Our teacher does not, therefore, instruct us to practise abstinence from any thing that the law permits, or lightly to render such abstinence imperative upon us by oath or vow; but his maxim is, "If, from your warmth of temper, or proneness towards over-indulgence, you fear that, by giving way to those enjoyments which the law permits, you may be carried on to sinful excess : In that case, and in that case only, you do right to restrain your appetites by practising abstemiousness, or even total abstinence. And, should you find your resolution wavering, then a vow, maturely considered and kept with inflexible determination, will form a fence to that abstinence, which in itself is a fence erected from necessity, and to keep within its confines the extreme ardour of a temper, which, in its exuberance, might easily convert lawful enjoyment into excess and sin."

The fence for wisdom is silence— Our teacher commences his instruction by acquainting us with the primary causes which seduce men into the snares of infidelity; accordingly he tells us, that "laughter and levity accustom men to lewdness;" and, having pointed out to us the disease, he likewise unfolds to us the remedy, and, therefore, tells us that as boisterous mirth, levity, and lightness of conversation insensibly lead men on and accustom them to lewdness or impurity of thought, which brings them to desecrate and profane what is most holy; so, on the contrary, silence, or the habit of

listening profoundly and attentively to what is going on around us, and reflecting maturely on what we hear, see, or read, is the great fence to wisdom: This great rule is in accordance with the wise maxim of one of the elder *tanaim*, who said, "Whosoever is profuse of words, causeth sin."* Sometimes a propensity for scoffing, or licentiousness, is inherent in man: If he knows this, and bridles his tongue, his silence will fence in and protect his wisdom; as by that means he will restrain the vicious inclination,

which, if not kept under rigorous subordination, is likely to hurry him on to sin and disgrace. And, as he who talks much has seldom time to think, or reflect on what he says, want of thought and consideration must cause him to utter many a silly or frivolous speech; a failing from which he is exempt who speaks less, and properly weighs his words. Nay, even though he be by nature less brilliantly gifted than his talkative companion, he will nevertheless be considered as much the wiser of the two: As Solomon saith, "Even the fool who is taciturn will be considered as wise." (Prov. xvii. 28)

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. I., p. 218.

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 121.)

CHAPTER X.

THE proofs deduced from reason, in confirmation of the superintendence of the Divine Providence, and the cognizance it takes of the individuals composing the human race, and of their various actions, are twofold. First, as regards those to whom this superintendence is extended; and, secondly, Him (blessed be HE!) from whom it emanates.

With respect to the first, or as regards those to whom this superintendence is extended, it is evident from the intellectual powers with which man only (among all the animate beings of this nether creation) is gifted, that he cannot have a purpose and existence solely as a component part of a race or species, as is the case with all other animals who are not endowed with any such intellectual powers, but exist without them. And, as in this instance we find that man has a decided and preponderating advantage over all other animals, it is incorrect to assume that he is cast out and abandoned without any superintendence over his respective actions; and thereby assimilated to the brute creation; although he has over them the great advantages of knowledge

and understanding. This argument is alluded to by the Deity in his reply to Job; where, before enumerating the manifold mercies He has bestowed on animals according to their various kinds or species, in extending to each race a special superintendence for its preservation, and necessary to the welfare of that peculiar race, (as, for instance, "Who provides the raven with its food? Who gives the wild ass liberty to roam," &c.; (Job xxxviii. 41); He, in reply to Job's complaint, Why does he bestow light on the wretched? (iii. 20,) demands, "Who has put wisdom in the hidden parts? And who has given understanding to the heart?" (Job xxxviii. 36.) We have already stated in our first division, (Chap. xvi.) that the word *בטוחות* (rendered in the English version by *hidden parts*) means "security or assurance," (the *ב* being a radical letter, and the root *בטח*;) by *חכמה* wisdom he means those impressions which are innate in man; and by *בנה* perception, he means those intellectual powers which call into activity the innate impressions dormant in his mind. The true reading of the verse would then be, "Who has secured to man those innate impressions from which alone wisdom arises; or perception, in order to attain know-

ledge by means of comparison?"* Thus he mentions the wisdom and understanding bestowed on each individual man as proofs of the special superintendence of Providence extended to him individually: And that these gifts, which are peculiar to man only, of all animate beings, are unquestionably conferred on him in order that he may attain a perfection of purpose, greatly transcending theirs. These advantages, of which we find man alone possessed, evidently demonstrate that man ranks higher in the scale of creation,—and, consequently, in the Divine estimation,—than any other terrestrial being; therefore it is proper that Divine Providence should take cognizance of him according to his intellectual advantages; and, therefore, extends its superintendence to him in a far more eminent degree than to other animate beings. Maimonides writes, "that the extent of superintendence afforded by Divine Providence corresponds with the intellectual perfection in man:" If this is true, he who has rendered his soul perfect, according to the extent of intellectual powers with which he is gifted, is more worthy of the minute cognizance of Providence than he who has not rendered his soul perfect, but suffers the intellectual powers with which he is gifted to be lost: In doing so, he reduces himself to a standard below that of humanity, and approximating to that of animals; and is, therefore, in a less degree worthy of the minute cognizance of Providence. We consider it a strong proof that the superintendence of Providence is extended to intellectual beings according to their mental perfections, when we find that at the first formation or creation of man, Providence was intent to give him decided advantages over all other terrestrial beings, and therefore took care to endow him with intellectual powers; which as, in the first instance, they had been bestowed on him by the especial superintendence of Providence, and continue to distinguish him from and above all other animate beings of this mundane creation, still secure to him the minute

cognizance and superintendence of that Divine Providence, according to the degree of perfection which he attains in the developement of his intellectual or moral and mental powers; and which perfection, raising him from the lower or terrestrial world, causes him to approximate to the purer intelligences of celestial creation.

This proof that Divine Providence extends its superintendence to this nether world, derived from the intellectual powers of man, is confirmed by the Sacred Singer in the eighth Psalm: He says, "O Lord our God, how glorious is thy name over all the earth!" The word *מה*, "how," is not used to express the greatness of glory, but rather the reverse, as Moses, when remonstrating with the Israelites, uses the same expression: *ונהנו מה*, "What are we that you should complain or murmur against us?" (Exod. xvi. 8.) Thus David expresses his surprise, How can the glory of thy name on earth be worthy of thee, since thy Majesty overspreads the heavens? These, in their splendour, duration, and extent, are more worthy of attesting thy matchless glory than the humble earth, which is altogether beneath thy greatness! To this question he replies, "From the mouth of babes and of sucklings thou hast prepared strength." The impressions which are innate in man, and which he has not acquired by study, but which are thy gift, show that thou hast deemed him worthy of thy superintendence; and that therefore the glory he renders to thy name is not indifferent to thee. He then goes on to state the reason why this Divine superintendence is extended to man, and says, "Because of thine enemies, and to destroy the revengeful foe." The former say, "God has abandoned the earth; he does not notice our actions:" And the latter strive to oppress, wrong, and injure whosoever stands in the way of their selfish ambitious designs, because they think that Divine Providence does not superintend terrestrial affairs, or interpose to protect or avenge the oppressed. To destroy this per-

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. I., page 36.

noxious error, Providence has gifted man with intellectual powers which are innate, though dormant in the suckling infant. These powers man has the capacity to develop; and their possession teaches him, that, as the Deity has distinguished each individual man from and above all other terrestrial beings, by superior mental endowments, he likewise distinguishes him by a more perfect superintendence, and a more minute and individual cognizance. This idea, which the Sacred Singer briefly introduces to us in the opening verses of his eighth Psalm, he continues to enlarge on, and proceeds to say, "When I behold thy heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast created; what is man that thou shouldst remember him, the son of man that thou shouldst visit him?" When I behold the heavens in their splendour and immeasurable extent: When I see the moon and stars in glorious radiance, and know that they are but thy creatures, the works of thy Divine will, whose word called them into existence, and whose mercy preserves their being: When I think on the vast difference between thee and them, the measureless inferiority of the creature to the Creator, and yet behold how great, how glorious these thy works are when compared to this terrestrial world; I find that man, though at the head of this nether creation, is at such an immense distance from thee, that I cannot conceive how thou shouldst deign at all to "remember him," or to extend to him the superintendence of thy Providence; or, what is still more incomprehensible, shouldst even "visit him," and take minute cognizance of his various actions. Yet, when I maturely reflect on the manifold gifts with which thy beneficence has endowed man, I find, that, such as thou hast made him, he is not altogether unworthy of thy superintendence; for "thou hast made him but little less than angels, and hast crowned him with honour and dignity." Thou hast gifted him with intellectual powers, which place him next in rank to those purer intelligences called angels; the difference

between them being, that they are essential, and therefore perfect intelligences; while he, though actively intellectual, is corporeal, and therefore imperfect. And these intellectual powers which thou hast bestowed on him form unto him a crown of honour and dignity, which enables him to fulfil the office thou assignedst to him, when "thou gavest him dominion over the work of thy hands; thou hast put all under his feet," &c. These intellectual powers, thy gift, enable him to rule the works of thy nether creation; they render all animals subject to him, and even enable him to trace a path through the mighty waters of the ocean. And as thus thou hast exalted him above all animate beings on earth, thy providence superintends him, and takes cognizance of his actions. Such are the proofs afforded by reason as regards man, to whom the superintendence of the Divine Providence is extended.

The second class of proofs, or those which regard Him, (blessed be He!) from whom that superintendence emanates, are deducible from a two-fold cause. 1. From the wisdom and omnipotence of God; 2. From man being the work of His creative will. The first cause rests on the innate impression, that the Deity must be possessed of every possible perfection, and exempt from any possible imperfection. We find that it constitutes a part of man's perfection, that he should pay due attention to the work of his hands, so that it may be completed according to the plan he has laid down to himself, and attain the purpose which he contemplated in commencing his work. We also find that the perfections of a ruler require that he should pay due attention to the welfare of those who are subject to his sway, to govern them wisely and justly. But the man who neglects the work of his hands, and the ruler who is inattentive to the welfare of those who are subject to his government, prove that each respectively is labouring under a great defect. In man it proves that he is either ignorant or impotent, and altogether inadequate to conduct and complete the work he has commenced, and in

the ruler who is possessed of the power to perform his duties, it proves that he is unjust and wicked, or that he despises his subjects. Now as the Holy One (blessed be He!) is omnipotent, it cannot be asserted that He neglects, or is inattentive to man, the work of his hands, and whom He governs, from want of power; and as He is all-wise and omniscient, no one will presume to maintain that He abandons man from ignorance. Indeed Job himself admitted both the infinite power and wisdom of the Deity; yet he presumed to tax the Supreme Being with injustice, and that, as He was alone, and no one had the power to control him, He ruled men, who were subject to his sway, capriciously, and therefore unjustly. Thence Job exclaims: "He is not a man like me that I could answer him, or that we could come together in judgment: There is no umpire between us, whose hand would weigh on us both." (Job ix. 30, 31.) And again: "He is alone; who can gainsay him? and according to his will he acts." (Job xxiii. 13.) This presumptuous imputation Elihu refutes, when he says, "Far be it from God to act unjustly, or Omnipotence to do wrong." (Job xxxiv. 10.) He uses the word אלהים, "God," in allusion to his absolute and uncontrolled power, as if he meant to say, "As he is God, and therefore all-perfect, it is impossible that He should ever abuse his power by acting capriciously." Elihu then goes on to say, "It is equally impossible that the Deity should abandon or place man without the pale of his providential superintendence, or not reward the righteous man according to his merits, or punish the wicked according to his demerits: Since such a dereliction of what is due from Him as the Ruler to those whom He governs, could only result from His being inadequate to conduct the world which He had created; a supposition altogether contrary to truth, as He is שרר, "the Omnipotent," who is all-sufficient to promote every part of His creation to that perfection of purpose for which it was by Him destined. And in order to confirm his argument, Elihu adds, "He will reward man

according to his deeds, and meet every one according to his ways." (Job xxxiv. 11.) By the first part of this sentence, the speaker alludes to the reward which awaits the good, and by the latter part to the punishment which befalls the bad. Thus the power and the wisdom of the Deity render it impossible that he should justly be taxed with abandoning man; but these Divine perfections are a proof, that, having created man according to will and intention, it is in accordance with the wisdom, power, and beneficence of the Creator, that he should extend the superintendence of his Divine Providence to the individual man.

The second, namely, from man's being the work of his creative will, is adduced by Elihu, who thereby refutes the strongest argument which Job had made use of when calling into question the superintendence of Providence. Job, when arraigning the Divine government, says, "What is man that thou shouldst exalt him, or that thou shouldst turn thy heart to him?" (Job vii. 15.) As God is so very high, and man is at such an immeasurable distance beneath him, Job maintained, that man was too mean to be thought worthy of the superintendence of Providence, which, therefore, does not take cognizance of man's individual actions, any more than of the actions of other mean animals: And this want of superintendence was one of the wrongs with which Job taxes the Divine government in another place, when he says, "Is it beseeeming thee that thou shouldst injure and despise the work of thy hands?" (Job x. 3.) He calls man, the work of God's hand, being gifted with intellectual powers, and an immortal soul, and not merely material as other animals: And having in these words alluded to the relation which subsists between the Creator and his intellectual creatures, he vents his reproach in the expression, "Is it beseeeming thee that thou shouldst so greatly injure thy intellectual creature as to despise him, and deem him and his actions unworthy of thy superintendence or cognizance? For, though the Deity is perfection in the

fullest sense of the word, and man, compared to that inexpressibly Great Being, sinks into utter nothingness ; yet, all-perfect as thou art, thou shouldest not deprive thy intellectual creature, man, of the possibility of attaining that perfection, the acquisition of which is possible to him from the nature of the mental powers thou hast gifted him with, but which the want of thy superintending Providence places altogether beyond his reach." And he concludes by saying, "Thou shinest on the counsels of the wicked : " As if he meant to say, "Thy example encourages the wicked in their evil designs : For when they find that thou exposest the righteous to their machinations, they think that thou shinest on, or approve of, their counsels, and confirmest their maxims, so that it is indifferent whether man acts virtuously or viciously." This argument of Job Elihu answers and refutes when he says, "Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not," &c. (Job xxxvi. 5.) His meaning is, that God cannot possibly abandon man, because he despiseth him ; as it is contrary to the qualities of an intellectual agent that he should despise the work of his own hands when it is in his power to improve and perfect them ; and as the Deity is omnipotent, and therefore has it in his power to promote man to the highest degree of perfection which He (blessed be He !) intended him to attain, and rendered him capable of

acquiring, it is impossible that an all-perfect Being should despise his own creatures : For, as man is gifted with the principle of intelligence, it rests with the Deity to afford his aid in rendering that principle active : And were He to deny that aid which is requisite to complete the creature he formed, it would argue an imperfection on his part which is altogether contrary to any idea man can form of the Deity. And as Job had said, that the dereliction of the Divine government strengthens the wicked in their evil counsels, Elihu refutes the assertion, and says, "He does not preserve the wicked, but does justice to the poor : He turns not his eye from the righteous," &c. (Job xxxvi. 6, 7,) thereby proving that Divine Providence takes cognizance of the individual actions of men ; and, as they are either good or bad, rewards or punishes them. These arguments of Elihu are confirmed by the Deity, and their truth is eventually confessed by Job, when he says, "I know thou art omnipotent, and no presumptuous thought is hidden from thee." (Job xlii. 2.)

From all that we have here stated it is clear, and in accordance with reason, that the Divine Providence extends its superintendence to each individual man, and takes cognizance of his various actions, be they good or evil, to punish or reward every man according to his deeds.

(To be continued.)

III. TALMUDIC ALLEGORIES.

(Continued from page 123.)

THE VINE.

On the day of their creation the trees rejoiced, each exultingly praised its own good qualities : "The Lord has planted me," exclaimed the lofty cedar : "Firmness and fragrance, durability and strength are united in me."

"The mercy of the Lord has planted me as a blessing," said the umbrageous palm-tree : "Beauty and utility are combined in me."

The apple-tree said, "I stand

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glorious amongst the trees, like the sun amidst the celestial hosts." And the myrtle exclaimed : "Like the rose among thorns, I stand distinguished amongst my kindred, the underwood." All boasted ; the fig-tree, of its fruit ; the olive, of its richness ; even the pine-tree, and the fir, could rejoice and exult.

The vine alone remained drooping and silent : "To me," it mournfully said, "every thing seems denied ; stem nor branches, blossom nor fruit, can I boast ; yet, such as I am, I

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will wait in silent hope." It sank down, and its tendrils wept in sorrow and solitude.

Not long it waited and wept; when, behold, the new-created lord of earth, kind-hearted man, approached. He saw a feeble plant, a play-thing to the winds, sunk low, as if imploring his aid. In pity he raised it, and wound the tender tree round his arbour. Joyfully the air saluted the glowing vine, the heat of the sun penetrated its hard green grains, and prepared that sweet moisture, the most precious beverage of man. Decked out in the fulness of its rich grapes, the vine bent down to its preserver; he tasted its refreshing juice, and called the vine "his friend." The proud trees envied the feeble plant, for its fruit was more valued than theirs; but it rejoiced in its slender stem and the accomplishment of its hope: Therefore its juice still invigorates the human heart, it cheers the desponding spirit, and imparts its gladness to the mourning mind.

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Ye who are suffering and abandoned, do not despair, but persevere in patience and hope; there is an eye above that beholds even you; the humblest plant yields the most precious juice; the feeble vine begets vigour and animation.

THE SHEPHERD.

In the silent midnight hour, preceding the vernal festival, on which the first brothers were to bring their offering of gratitude to the Creator, their mother, in a dream, beheld a wondrous vision. The white roses, which her younger son had planted round his altar, had changed their hue: They were become more blood-red, more fully blown than any she had ever seen; she tried to break them, but they withered at her touch. On the altar lay a bleeding lamb: Plaintive voices rose around her, and amongst them a shriek of piercing despair, till all were lost, mingled in a heavenly harmony, the like of which she had never heard before.

And a beauteous plain lay before her, more beauteous than even the paradise of her youth. And a shepherd, in the shape and image of her son, arrayed in robes of blending white, tended his flocks. The red roses formed a garland, which entwined his brows, and in his hand he held a lute, from which went forth the harmony of heaven. His mild eye beamed affectionately on her; but when she approached to take his hand he vanished, and with him the vision of her dreams.

The mother of our race arose as the ruddy dawn illumined the sky: With a heavy heart she went to the festival.

The brothers brought their sacrifice: Their parents departed: Evening came, but her sons returned not. Their anxious mother went forth to seek them: She found Abel's flocks scattered, and mournfully lowing. He himself lay lifeless at the foot of the altar: His blood dyed the roses he had planted; and Cain's groans of anguish resounded from a neighbouring cavern.

Fainting she sank on the corpse of her son, when again she beheld the nocturnal vision of her dream. Her son was the shepherd whom she had seen in the beauteous fields of the new paradise. The red roses were twined round his brows; in his hand he held a harp, and his soft accents fell sweetly on her ear as he sung to her: "Look up to the heavens, to the stars: Look up, all weeping as thou art, my mother. Behold yon splendid wain, it leads to fields more blooming, to a paradise more beauteous, than thou ever sawest in Eden's garden; where the blood-stained rose of suffering innocence blooms in celestial splendour, and its sighs are turned into tunes of rapture."

The vision vanished: But with a strengthened mind, and confident resignation, Eve rose from the inanimate body of her son. The next morning his parents bedewed it with their scalding tears, crowned it with the roses dyed in his life-blood, and buried him at the foot of the altar he had raised to the Lord, in the presence of the mild dawn which spread its orient tints over the sky.

Often they sat at his tomb in the silent hour of midnight: Their eyes were lifted to heaven; there they sought their beloved Shepherd; there they hoped to be re-united to him.

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THE DEATH OF ADAM.

NINE hundred and thirty years had passed from the moment when the breath of the Creator gave life to the clay, when Adam felt within himself the sentence of the Judge, "THOU SHALT SURELY DIE."

"Let all my sons appear before me," he said to the weeping Eve: "Let them all come that I may once more see and bless them." His descendants all came obedient to their father's command. Many hundreds in number, they all stood around him and wept; all prayed for his life.

"Who among you," said Adam, "will ascend the holy mount? Perhaps he may find mercy for me, and bring me the fruit of the tree of life." All his sons arose; each was willing to go: But the father selected Seth, the most pious among them, to be the messenger of imploring pity.

His head strewed with ashes, he tarried not, but hastened on, till he

reached the gates of paradise. "Let him find mercy, All-merciful," he implored, "and send my father the fruit of the tree of life."

Suddenly, a radiant cherub stood before him; in his hand he held, not fruit, but a branch with one solitary leaf. "Convey this to thy father," he said, with a friendly voice; "convey it to cheer his parting hour, for eternal life dwells not on earth. But haste thee, for his hour is come."

With hurried step Seth approached the couch of his dying father. "No fruit of the tree of life do I bring thee;" "my father," he said; "this branch the angel gave me to cheer thy parting hour."

The father of humankind took the branch and rejoiced; he inhaled the odour of paradise, and his soul became invigorated. "My children," he said, "everlasting life we find not on earth: You all will follow me. But in this leaf I scent, I breathe the air of another world, of immortality."—His eye closed; his spirit fled.

Adam's children buried their father, and mourned for him thirty days: But Seth wept not, and mourned not. He planted the branch at the head of his father's tomb, and called it the branch of renovated life, of awaking from the sleep of death.

IV. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

AT a time when Europe was plunged in the extreme darkness of ignorance and barbarity, when rude warriors and brutal priests vied with each other in despising knowledge and persecuting its professors, the scanty lights of science and of truth which gleamed forth amidst the general gloom, were cherished and kept alive by the Jews of Spain; who, under the mild sceptre of the Arab conquerors and rulers of that country, raised the schools which produced a R. Isaac Alphes, R. Salomon Gabirol, R. Jehuda Hallevi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Maimonides, Nachmanides, Rabenu Bechai, Bad-rashi, R. Isaac Lateph, and a long list of others, whose universal know-

ledge excites our astonishment, while their stupendous works spread a lustre round the literature of the Hebrews, which no distance of time can diminish, and no calumny can obscure. All of these men were intimately acquainted with the sacred literature of the Jews, the "תורה," or "Bible," the Talmud, together with the writings of their predecessors the elder Rabbies and Gaonim. Many of them were at once pre-eminent as philosophers, philologists, physicians, and astronomers. Some were excellent mathematicians; and, not a few, highly gifted poets: And we do not fear contradiction, when we broadly assert, that no nation in the universe can, during a conti-

nuous period of full five hundred years, produce a line of men so truly eminent, so universally learned, as can the Jews of Spain from the year 980, until their expulsion from that kingdom in the year 1492. As it may not be altogether uninteresting to our readers, we intend to offer them a short sketch of the rise and progress of that school to which we Jews of the present day are indebted for the most valuable works which ornament our libraries, and, which, were their contents more generally diffused among our nation, would ornament our minds and enlighten our ideas to an extent of which but few of us are aware.

After the destruction of Jerusalem and the disasters which befel the Jews in Alexandria, the learning of our nation sought and found a refuge, partly midst the reeking ruins of our own country, and partly on the borders of the Euphrates. The learned *tanaim*, who escaped from the anarchy and carnage of Jerusalem, found a shelter at Jannia. A school, which subsequently was removed to Tiberias, was formed, over which the descendants of the sage and pious Hillel presided in lineal succession, under the title of נשיא, "prince or patriarch." The dignity of his office was acknowledged by the Roman Emperors, even after Christianity became the religion of the state, and his authority extended far over the western world. Under him the famous *tanaim* conducted the schools; and a monument of their burning zeal, and perseverance, is left to us in the well-known compilation of the *Mishna*, undertaken by R. Jehuda Hanassi, and the Jerusalem Talmud, by his pupil R. Jochanan. But various causes combined to undermine the authority of the Nassi, the prosperity and existence of the school. Pressure from without, weakness and disunion from within, at last put an end to the school, which, after a feeble attempt to restore its splendour and authority, finally expired about four centuries after its institution.

Contemporary with the schools of Jannia and Tiberias, sometimes subordinate to the authority of the Patriarch, but mostly independent,

flourished the schools of Sura, Pumbeditha, and Nahardea, all in the dominions of the kings of Persia, and situated on the borders of the Euphrates and Tigris. These schools, frequented by the Jews of Asia, were presided over by learned men, who assumed the title of *gaonim*, or illustrious; while the temporal or executive power over the Jews was held by a vicegerent appointed by the kings of Persia, and who was styled *Resh gelutha*, or, "Prince of the Captivity." In these Persian, or as they were called, Babylonian, schools, that wonderful compilation, the Babylonian Talmud, was undertaken and completed by Rav Ashi, Rav Abina, and their associates the Amoraim. This work, which forms a compendium of Jewish theology and jurisprudence, was at that time no where taught in such perfection as at the schools of the *gaonim*. The western Jews, who, since the extinction of the patriarchate at Tiberias, were left without a chief, were obliged to resort to these schools for teachers and for instruction, and were consequently held in a degree of dependence on their eastern brethren, and their chief the *Resh gelutha*; which, while it forced them to pursue their studies in a far-distant land, necessarily limited the number of the students; and not only restricted their progress to the cycle of instruction adopted in these schools, but also fettered the most talented among them to a spot where constant intercourse with the most learned men of the age, uninterrupted opportunities of pursuing their studies at the fountain head, and the prospects of promotion, wealth and honour, combined their charms to render them forgetful of their far-distant native land, which offered no such advantages.

As long as the Babylonian schools were under the guidance of men whose principal object was the instruction and improvement of their pupils, and whose reputation and authority, resulting from acknowledged piety, learning, and integrity, could control the ambitious longings of their temporal chief, the *Resh gelutha*: As long as the Per-

sian kings, and afterwards their conquerors, the *caliphs*, ruled over territories so extensive that they could not become tempted to envy the delegated authority of their deputy, the prince of the captivity, or to interfere in the internal affairs of their Jewish subjects; the perfect freedom enjoyed by the frequenters of the schools, and the real improvement which the students there made, in a great measure compensated the evils which necessarily resulted from the circumstance, that the means of acquiring learning were to the Jews limited to one particular spot. To the western Jews, and particularly to those who resided in the Gothic kingdom of Spain and in France, the difference between the treatment experienced by their oriental brethren, and that to which they were subject in their own native land, must have exercised a marked influence, and contributed not a little towards keeping alive within them a sense and feeling of their own dignity; which, through the brutalizing enactments of fanatical councils, and the grinding oppression of tyrannical rulers, they had well nigh lost. The *caliphs*, during the first two centuries which followed the establishment of their monarchy, did not interfere with the internal affairs of the Jews. Their *Resh gelutha* held an office which during many centuries had been delegated by the reigning monarch, in consideration of a certain stipulated price, and the election to which, by the Jews themselves, was a mere formality, until sanctioned by the royal approbation. The *caliphs*, who, without trouble or expense, collected their revenues from their Jewish subjects, through the instrumentality of their native princes, could not but be desirous that the office should continue in fulness of force and authority; and did not, therefore, at all disturb the administration of the *Resh gelutha*, or oppress his brethren. It appears that the *caliphs*, Abdalmelek, Walid, Soliman, Omar, Jesid, and Heschem, delighted in the society and conversation of learned and talented Jews. The love of learning, which soon spread among the Arabs, could not but render the in-

struction of the Jews necessary and agreeable to them. The more learned of the *caliphs* encouraged them at their courts, entrusted them with offices of confidence, dignity, and emolument; and we even find that Omar the second did not hesitate to employ the instrumentality of a Jew, in an affair which appears least adapted for Jewish intervention.

Ali was the son-in-law of the prophet, and author of the commentaries on the new law, which rendered him generally hated. He had been compelled to give way to the first *caliphs*, but had subsequently attained to that dignity himself, which he held for a short time, until he was assassinated through Moavia, the founder of the Omiade dynasty. The *caliphs* of that family caused him to be declared an Heretic, who was solemnly anathemized during the celebration of Divine worship. Omar the II. inclined to the doctrines of Ali, and was therefore intent on having this anathema abrogated; but, fearful of irritating the people, he took the following circuitous method of accomplishing his purpose. He planned it with a Jew, who was in his confidence, that he should demand the hand of the *caliph's* daughter. The Jew did this in the presence of all the chief dignitaries of the empire, who were assembled at the court of the *caliph*. The monarch, without appearing angry or astonished at the boldness of the demand, calmly replied, "I cannot comply with thy request, as thou dost not believe in my religion." "What difference can that make?" said the Jew, "Did not your prophet, Mahomet, give his daughter to Ali, and she became his wife?" "O that case is very different," rejoined the *caliph*; "Ali was a Mussulman, and commander of the faithful." "How can that be?" said the Jew, "If Ali was a believer, why do you curse and anathematize him in your mosques during divine service?" The *caliph* looked around him, and, addressing his courtiers, who were attentively listening to this singular dialogue, said, "Answer the Jew, if ye are able." But as no one was capable to give a cogent reply, or to defend the anathema on

good grounds, the caliph broke the silence which prevailed, by declaring, that this anathema was reprehensible and impious, and should, therefore, be abolished; and that, thenceforth, instead of the curse, the following words should be used, which are still employed in the Mahometan form of prayers: "Pardon, O Lord, our sins, and the sins of those who are of the same faith with us."

This curious anecdote affords a proof of the intimate footing the Jews must have stood on in the court of the caliph: As unless the individual who applied for the hand of the monarch's daughter, had been of rank and fortune sufficient to render such a request reasonable, the caliph could not have escaped the charge of collusion, if he left so bold an outrage on his dignity and creed go unpunished. The intrigues carried on in the interior of the palace, and the contests carried on by the various pretenders to the succession of the caliphate, did not influence the social position of the Jews. Their schools were flourishing, and frequented by numerous students. It is true, that in these schools no other branch of study was cultivated, except that of the Talmud, which was investigated, copied, and commented on to an astonishing extent. Nevertheless the Jews kept pace with the Arabs in the progress which these now made in the medical science, in astronomy, and philosophy; and were able to occupy an honourable position in the career of emulation. And though the Talmudic schools did not directly contribute to their progress, yet they greatly aided in developing the acuteness of the student, and calling into play his natural talents; so that, armed with the subtle and profound dialectics of the Talmud, they found their zealous and eager advance in the acquisition of mundane knowledge both rapid and steady.

But the palmy days of the Babylonian schools were not destined to last for ever. The great revenues and high dignity enjoyed by the Gaonim became objects of jealous emulation, and caused dissensions most ruinous to the seminaries over which they presided. As soon as

the thirst for dignity and emolument usurped the place of piety and the desire to promote the progress of learning and religion, collisions arose between the legislative authority of the Reshe methibtoth, (Chiefs of the schools,) and the executive power of the Resh gelutha. Such a collision produced the schism in Israel which gave rise to the formation of the sect of the Karaites, who, reviving the opinions of the ancient Sadducees, rejected the oral laws, tradition, and the authority of the Rabbies. They seceded from the great Jewish community, and, under the leadership of Anan and his son Saul, formed a distinct sect (about the year 751) which still subsists. The separation which then took place, not only lost to the schools some teachers, and many students, but the violent hostility of the two contending parties called for the interference of the caliphs. The rich bribes which both Rabbinites and Karaites presented to the monarch and his principal officers of state excited, instead of satisfying, their cupidity: And as the power of the caliph gradually declined, as one country after another became severed from his sceptre, rival caliphates started up at Cairo and Cordova; and the governors of various provinces strove to become independent sovereigns, or at best professed a mere nominal dependence on, and subjection to, the commander of the faithful: And as the loss of power was accompanied by the loss of revenue, the caliphs became more and more tempted to interfere with their Jewish subjects, to exercise against them the authority which in every other quarter was disputed, and, by rapacious exactions from them, to make up for the declining revenues which, without such accessions, could no longer support the splendour of their state. Their extortions weighed heavily on the Jews, in general, but more particularly on the schools, which, endowed with considerable revenues, offered the greedy rulers an easy means of supplying their wants. In addition to this ruinous intervention from without, and the disputes of the most violent kinds, which existed between the Rabbinites and

the Karaites, disunion prevailed among the former in a very high degree. During the dissensions between R. David ben Saccai, the Resh gelutha, and R. Saadiah Gaon, chief of the school at Sura; that school, during seven years, (from 928 until 934,) remained without any acknowledged chief. And a few years afterwards the usurpation of that high office by a man who was not properly qualified, led to the dispersion of the students, and to the final close of the school at Sura, about the year 959.

The school at Pumbeditha flourished somewhat longer, principally through the exertions of R. Sherira Gaon, who presided upwards of thirty years, and of his son R. Hai Gaon, to whom, on account of his own advanced age, he resigned his high dignity. But through envy, inward dissensions, and intrigues, the caliph, Ahmed Kader, was induced to throw both father and son into prison, to seize on their property, and to cause R. Sherira, who had reached the high age of one hundred years, to be put to death in the year 997. It appears, however, that he became convinced of their innocence, since he again liberated R. Hai Gaon, who re-assumed the united offices of Resh gelutha, and Resh methibta, which he continued to hold till his death, in the year 1036. He was succeeded in both his offices by Hiskiah, a grandson of R. David ben Saccai, who had been the chief instigator of the misfortunes which befel R. Sherira and his son. But his own fate was equally unfortunate. In the second year of his office he was put to death by the caliph Abdallah Kaim Beamrillah. With him the office of Resh gelutha ceased; the school over which he had presided was left without a head; the students dispersed; and the learned republic of the Jews on the borders of the Euphrates, which had subsisted and maintained itself during nearly 1000 years, was extinguished and disappeared.

Had this extinction of the schools taken place, while yet the western world was unprovided with any seat of learning, or with competent teachers, the influence of that

event must have been severely felt by the Jews. But an accidental circumstance had, a short time before that extinction took place, transplanted a branch of the learning of the east to Spain, where it soon took root, and flourished so luxuriantly, as to overshadow the fame of its parent stock.

About the year 980, and while R. Sherira Gaon held the two high offices of Resh Gelutha and Resh Methibta, four of the most celebrated Rabbies of the Babylonian schools undertook a voyage together on board the same vessel. Their names were Rabenu Hushiel, R. Moses, R. Shemaria ben Elchanan: The name of the fourth has not reached us. The object of their journey was charitable, being a mission to collect money for poor and orphan brides. The ship in which they sailed was taken by a Spanish pirate, who bound the unfortunate Rabbies, and treated them like slaves; nor did they discover their rank and station. R. Moses was accompanied by his wife and child. The beauty of the former inflamed the desires of the pirate captain; and as she saw no means of escaping or resisting his violence, the noble-minded woman determined to prefer death to dishonour. But one doubt preyed on her mind, and she asked her husband in Hebrew whether those who perish in the sea will rise again at the resurrection of the dead. R. Moses answered her in the verse of Holy Writ, "The Lord saith, I will bring back from Bashan, I will bring back from the depths of the sea." (Psalm lxxviii. 22.) The heroic woman no longer hesitated: Casting one look of love and anguish on her husband and her child, she threw herself into the sea, and ended her pure and faithful life in the waves.

R. Shemaria was soon afterwards carried to Alexandria, where he was sold as a slave. The Jews who resided there, redeemed him; and when his talents became known, he was elected chief of the community at Mizr. Rabenu Hushiel was sold on the coast of Tunis, and after various vicissitudes became chief of the Jewish community at Alcairo: His son was the celebrated R. Hanan-

neel. R. Moses and his son Henoch were carried to Cordova, where the Jews redeemed both, but without expecting that R. Moses was a man in any way distinguished. One day R. Moses, dressed in the sackcloth garment of slavery, went to the synagogue, and after Divine worship was concluded, he, with many others, repaired to the adjoining college, where, according to custom, cases of Talmudic law were argued. R. Nathan, the judge of the Jewish community at Cordova, was the lecturer. Every one had the right to interrupt the discourse by putting questions and urging objections. R. Moses listened to several assertions which were contrary to the principles and doctrines of the Babylonian schools, at that time the great sources of all Jewish learning. Remaining silent for a time, he suddenly excited the attention and astonishment of all present, by advancing a remark which completely refuted R. Nathan's opinion. His objections were acknowledged to be correct, and he was requested to expound the subject then under discussion. He complied, and illustrated the subject with the fulness of the marvellous learning and extensive knowledge of which he was possessed, answering all questions that were put to him, and meeting every objection; not only those that were, but even those which might be, urged. At the door, two litigants were standing, who wished to submit their differences to R. Nathan, but who, according to the established rules, were obliged to await the termination of the lecture. When the lecture was closed, and the parties appeared before R. Nathan, he exclaimed aloud, "I am no longer judge. The stranger whom you see here, in his garment of sackcloth, is my teacher: I am but his disciple: Choose him for your judge." This

humility on the part of R. Nathan was generally approved of. R. Moses was by unanimous consent appointed chief of the Jewish community, had a considerable revenue assigned to him, and received as a present a very splendid carriage. The pirate captain, who soon learned the importance and distinguished rank of the man whom he had sold to the Jews at the price of a common slave, wished to annul his bargain, and laid claim to a higher ransom. The Jews justly resisted his demand, and the cause was carried before Hascham the Second, who not only confirmed the sale, but also the appointment which the Jews had made of R. Moses to be their chief. He also expressed his great satisfaction that his Jewish subjects would no longer have occasion to repair to the east in order to study the Talmud. Accordingly, R. Moses established a school at Cordova, which the western Jews frequented with avidity. He himself stood in high consideration and favour with the king; and one of his disciples was employed to translate the Talmud into Arabic. It appears that in causing this translation to be undertaken, king Hascham wished to acquaint himself with the contents of a compilation held in high esteem by the Jews: He may also have wished to facilitate the study of it to those Jews who did not understand the rabbinical tongue; and to put into the hands of his own judges the code of the Jews in order that they might be the better able to investigate matters of dispute among them if the decisions of their own Rabbies should be appealed from. It is said, that R. Joseph bar Isaac ben Stanas completed this translation, (about the year 1000,) highly to the satisfaction of the king, whose good graces he thereby obtained.

(To be continued.)

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I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ז לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 133.)

He * used to say, "Man is beloved, for he was created in the image of God; but that love was greater still which made it known to him that he was created in the image of God; as it is said, 'In the image of God He made man.'" (III. 18.)

COMMENTARY. *Man is beloved, for he was created in the image of God*—One of the preceding tana'im, enumerating the various opinions entertained by infidels, cites among them the belief of those who assert, that man is not gifted with an immortal soul, or is in any way superior to the brute creation, except by being endowed with a greater portion of sagacity and intelligence than other animals. Those who entertain this belief deny the Divine revelation and laws; not only the laws of Moses, given to the Israelites, but also the laws of the Noachidæ: For in placing man on a level with the brutes, his responsibility is at an end; he need fear no punishment, or hope for any reward, as the Divine Providence would not take cognizance of human actions any more than it does of the beasts of the field, which have no individual existence or purpose in the scale of creation. This opinion, entertained by infidels of the worst species only, is, as we have already pointed out, || very pernicious, and exercises an influence most fatal on those in whose minds it takes root. Our teacher therefore directs his maxim against that opinion, and tells us that man is beloved; that is to say, superior in the estimation of the Deity to all other animate beings on earth, because he alone is created in the image of God, as it is said in Holy Writ, "Let us make man in

our image and in our likeness, and they shall rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of heaven, and over the beasts, and over all the earth, and over all reptiles that crawl on the earth." (Gen. i. 26.) And relating the facts as they occurred, Holy Writ proceeds to inform us, "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him." (Gen. i. 27.) This love of the Deity is extended alike to the whole human race, since every man is made in the image of God, and therefore superior to all other animate beings that inhabit the globe. If we contemplate mankind we find that, numerous as are the individuals composing the human race, each one differs from his fellow in his ideas and actions. This, however, is not the case with any other species of animate beings; but the individuals composing the different kinds are perfectly alike in their actions and instincts, so that the habits of any one individual are those of the whole race. But though men are thus diversified, so that each individual man forms a microcosm or little world within himself, and their souls and mental powers are so very various, yet they all are alike "created in the image of God," and their souls are all emanations of the Creator, as Holy Writ expressly declares: "And the Lord God created man, dust of the earth, and He

* R. Akeebah.

|| Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., page 101.

blew in his nostrils a living soul, and man became a living soul." (Gen. ii. 7.) Whereas of all other terrestrial creatures it is said, "And the Lord God created from the earth all the beasts of the field and all the birds of heaven." (Gen. ii. 19.) Thus we find that at the creation of the animals, earth alone is mentioned, for they and their souls are alike earthly, and therefore of an inferior degree: As their substance is from the earth, so to the earth they return; nor are they or any of their kinds endowed with superior powers. But in stating the process of creation relative to man, Holy Writ first mentions the earth from which the human frame is moulded; and then tells us that "He blew in his nostrils a living soul;" thereby teaching us that this soul is not of an inferior origin, but directly emanated from the Most High; and that only when this soul, the pure emanation of the Creator, had been breathed into his earthly frame, man became "a living soul," and as such decidedly superior to all other terrestrial creatures. As all men are thus alike created in the image of God, and gifted with an immortal soul, it behoves man that his heart should yearn towards his brethren, the whole human race, and to love and honour them according to their virtues and deserts; for it is natural to love those who resemble us: Perfect love can only exist amongst equals, and there is a sympathetic bond of affection which draws man towards his fellow-man as soon as he discovers in him any trait which he thinks amiable, because it resembles his own disposition; and according to the value he entertains for that trait in his own disposition, the resemblance to which he discovers in his neighbour, his love to him will be more or less ardent and firm. He who knows and properly estimates the high value of his human prerogative, who feels that being created in the image of God, he is thereby become superior to every other species of animate creatures on earth; he who entertains this proper sense of the human dignity, and who sees his fellow-man gifted with the same high prerogative, and created, like himself,

"in the image of God," will love him ardently and sincerely, because he himself appreciates the great distinctive trait of which they are alike possessed: Whereas he who slights his own dignity, who does not value the great prerogative of being made "in the image of God," and who, consequently, is incapable of justly appreciating his own superiority over all other animals, cannot and will not sincerely and ardently love his neighbour, because he esteems not the great distinctive trait of which they are alike possessed.

The law bids us: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself;" (Lev. xix. 18;) which has been explained to mean, that the law directs us to love every human being in the same degree as we love ourselves: But this explanation is incorrect; for the law of God does not command us to perform that which is directly contrary to our nature; and every one knows and feels in his own soul that it is impossible he should obey this command of the law in the sense which the above explanation assigns. Who will work and slave, risk and venture, expose himself, and devote his whole existence, to promote the welfare of another as he would his own? Who can so acutely feel the pains and sufferings of another as he feels his own? Were we to insist on the Divine commandment being fulfilled according to the sense which the above explanation gives to it, we should impose a burthen on man so heavy that he could not support its pressure: For there is not a moment passes but that some man dies, or becomes impoverished and reduced from his former station, or afflicted by pains and sickness; and were we to love each of them as we love ourselves, the consequence would be, that we must feel for their sufferings and afflictions as acutely as for our own; so that our whole existence would be absorbed by grief, sorrow, and misery; which cannot be in accordance with the intentions of a beneficent Creator, whose will it is that all his creatures should be happy. And were it admitted that it is inconsistent with our own nature and happiness, and therefore

cannot be required of us that we should feel the sufferings of another as intensely as we feel our own, what then becomes of the above explanation of the Divine command? Moreover, love is a free affection of the heart, which cannot be produced by compulsion, or enjoined by command. It does not resemble those duties which require a positive performance, and which we have it in our power to obey by so disciplining our mind and inclinations that obedience to the Divine command becomes not only possible, but easy and agreeable. Whereas love, from its very nature, is free; nor can the mind, by any process of discipline, be trained to produce any sensation or feeling which shall be deserving of, or entitled to, the designation "love." It cannot, therefore, be supposed, that the Holy One, (blessed be He!) intimately acquainted as he must be with the intelligent beings He himself has created, should ever command man, when obedience is impossible, and when the nature of the feeling or affection which man is to entertain is altogether irreconcilable with anything like dictation or constraint. We therefore again repeat, that the general explanation of the Divine command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself," namely, that we are to love every human being in the same degree as we love ourselves, is wrong, cannot be practised or carried into effect, and is therefore contrary to the spirit and true meaning of the law, which commands and enjoins nothing, the obedience to and performance of which is not completely in our power: And after this declaration we will proceed to state what we consider to be the true intent and purpose of this Divine command. Know that to bear the same love, in all things, to another which we feel for ourselves, is not in human nature, but is one of those rare and wonderful occurrences which men witness but once in a generation or century. This species of love is in the sacred language (Hebrew) designated as אהבת נפש, "love of the soul," namely, that this love is as strong as that which man feels towards his own soul. Such was the love of Jonathan and David;

and therefore Holy Writ tells us, "And when he had ceased to speak to Saul, the soul of Jonathan became united to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him כנפשו 'like his own soul.' And Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him like his own soul." (1 Samuel xviii. 1, 3.) And when David composed his beautiful monody on the death of Jonathan, he says, "Thy love to me was wonderful; exceeding the love of women." (2 Samuel i. 26.) So that we see that this rare and wonderful love is in Holy Writ always designated as "love of the soul;" but the word במורו, "like himself," is nowhere used, because the word במוך, "like thyself," which is used in Leviticus, does not imply this highest and most rare degree of love: Had it therefore been the intention of the Divine Legislator, that man should entertain the strongest degree of love towards every one of his fellow-men, the words used would have been, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour" כנפשו, "like thy own soul." But had the intention of Holy Writ really been that our most ardent love must be alike extended to all mankind, where was the particular merit of Jonathan and David? and why is their perfect union of soul recorded in Holy Writ? Both were pious men: David, in particular, was of a most virtuous and benevolent disposition, and doubtless fulfilled the Divine command, to love his neighbour like himself, towards all mankind: Then why should the observance of this general command, between him and Jonathan, be singled out for our admiration? We answer, That it is so singled out and recorded, proves the great difference between that most rare degree of love called אהבת נפש, "love of the soul," and what Scripture really means when it tells us, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour" במוך, "like thyself." The real meaning of Scripture, and the precise command of the Divine Legislator is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour:" And as it is natural that man should love those who resemble him; as perfect love can only exist amongst equals, and

there is a sympathetic bond of affection which draws man towards his fellow-man, as soon as he discovers in his character any trait of resemblance to his own: Holy Writ, in order to facilitate the performance of the command, by assigning a sufficient reason for our obedience, adds כִּמְךָ, because he is "like thyself." There is between all the individuals composing the human species one point of resemblance: Equality and conformity so absolute and perfect, and, at the same time, so valuable and distinguished, as to identify all the members of the human race with each other. This precious point of resemblance is the צֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים, "the image of God," in which all mankind is created; and which renders every man, however low his station, however humble his attainments, however uncultivated his capacities, כִּמְךָ, "like unto thee," and therefore entitled to thy love, because if thou knowest and dost properly appreciate the high value of the human prerogative with which thou and thy neighbour are alike gifted by the Creator, the natural consequence will be, that thou wilt in him respect and love thy equal, who resembles thee. As such is the intention of the Divine Legislator, the command is general, "Thou shalt love," and does not prescribe any particular duties which are attached to the performing of this commandment, nor to what degree or extent this love is to be carried. In accordance with this our exposition, we find that the elder Hillel explained this passage when he said, "What is unpleasant or disagreeable to thee thou shalt not do to thy neighbour." Were the meaning of Holy Writ that we should love our neighbour as we love our own souls, not only would the commandment in question require no commentary, but the explanation of the sage and pious Hillel would actually have infringed on, and lessened the force of, the Divine command: As it is not sufficient simply to abstain from doing harm to our neighbour, but we are bound to do him actual good. But as it is not the intention of the law, here to enjoin that rare and wonderful absorption of self which is designated

as "love of the soul," Hillel's explanation is correct, as the duties of active benevolence, which are incumbent on us towards our fellow-men, are not included under this general command to love our neighbour, but are specially and repeatedly enjoined in the law.

It is in reference to this great and fundamental rule, the love which is due from man to all his brethren, the whole human species, that our teacher lays down the maxim "that man is beloved, for he was created in the image of God." For in consequence of this love, it is the duty of man to maintain his soul—the Divine image, in that state of purity in which it emanated from the Creator who bestowed it on him; which can only be done by a cheerful obedience to those laws, statutes, and commandments, which the Most High has vouchsafed to make known to man: And it is also his duty to love all his fellow-men, partakers with him of the high prerogative conferred on the human race, to promote and rejoice at their happiness, and to avoid on any occasion to afflict them or causing them any injury: And in so doing we shall be obeying the Divine commandment to love our neighbours, in its only practicable and therefore true sense. We are convinced that every reflecting mind will agree with us in the exposition which we have here given: And it is in the sense of this our exposition, that we read in the *Torath Cohanim*, c. xix., as a commentary on the words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself:" "R. Akeebah said, This is the great principle of the law: Ben Asai said, This is the book of the generations of man, &c. (Gen. v. 1.) is a greater principle." At first sight, it would appear that there is no connexion whatever between the two quotations from Scripture which R. Akeeba and Ben Asai respectively assert to be the great principles of the law: But a little reflection, aided by our exposition of the words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," will show the close and intimate connexion subsisting between the two passages from Holy Writ which the two tannaim hold up. R. Akeeba says, the command, "Thou shalt love thy

neighbour," &c. is the great principle of the law: Not because (as the *Beraitha* asserts) in this command are included all the active duties which it behoves man to perform towards his neighbour, and which are all comprised in the words "like thyself," in the same degree as he loves himself; for this rare and wonderful species of love is neither mentioned nor alluded to in that passage of Holy Writ: But because this command terminating with the remarkable word כְּמוֹךָ, "like thyself," teaches us the important fact, that all mankind are equals, created alike in the image of God. And it is in reference to this latter part of the passage in question that Ben Asai says, "This is the book of the

generations of man, &c. is a greater principle; for that passage continues, On the day that God created man, in the likeness of God he made him." And as the דְּמוּת אֱלֹהִים, "likeness of God" is of a superior degree to the צֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים, image of God, (as we shall explain in the next chapter,) Ben Asai justly asserts that the passage he quotes, and which declares that all mankind are alike endowed with the Divine similitude, contains a greater principle than the passage quoted by R. Akeeba, inasmuch as the whole human race are thereby declared partakers of the superior gift—the "likeness of God," denoting a more eminent degree than the "image of God."

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 137.)

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN we examine the various species of animate beings which inhabit the earth, the air, and the sea, we find that the Divine Providence has extended its superintendence to each species respectively in such a manner as to endow it with the utmost degree of perfection of which it is capable, according to its nature and rank in the scale of creation: And from this fact and the analogy which is observable in the various works of the Creator, we infer that a similar superintendence has likewise been extended to man, by bestowing on every individual the means of arriving at the utmost perfection of which he is capable, according to his nature and rank in the scale of creation. The assertion that Providence has granted to each species of animate beings its superintendence in a peculiar and distinct manner, in order to endow each race according to the utmost extent of those capabilities which are assigned to it by the laws of nature, is rendered evident and proved to be true, by the difference of organization, powers, and instincts, with which every species in particular is gifted,

and which are found in accordance with, and absolutely requisite to, its preservation. For instance: The horned cattle are herbivorous, because the greater part of the substance which composes the teeth, being absorbed by the horns, the upper jaws are left toothless; and, as they therefore are unable to masticate their food sufficiently to prepare it for digestion, nature has so constructed their inward organs, that their food undergoes a second process of mastication, and by chewing the cud they complete that necessary preparation which the defective organization of their teeth would otherwise leave imperfect. The beasts of prey, on the contrary, are carnivorous, because their jaws being furnished with their full complement of teeth, and they being also provided with claws, the joint operation of teeth and claws enables them at once so to masticate their food that digestion becomes easy, and requires no second process. Those creatures which find their food with ease, and plentifully, such as birds and fishes, are extremely quick of digestion; while, on the contrary, those whose subsistence is precarious, as the dog, digest their food much more slowly.

Our Rabbies, in the Talmud, (treatise *Sabbath*, folio 155,) remark that the dog requires three days to digest his food. The ant, which in so small a body evinces powers so varied, and activity so great, affords an indisputable proof of the care with which Divine Providence has provided and constructed every species of animate beings, in a manner corresponding with its wants, and has endowed it with instincts in accordance with its conformation; which enables us by analogy, to infer that man, individually, is similarly gifted and endowed. For we see that the superintendence of Providence, though directed alike to all animate beings for same purpose; namely, the perfection and preservation of every species respectively, does, nevertheless, operate differently on every particular species, and in such a manner as is necessary in order to secure to each species the utmost perfection of which it is capable, and the certainty of its preservation in the scale of creation: Thus for instance, when the raven forsakes its brood, their means of subsistence are furnished to them; when the wild hind of the mountains separates from her flock to cast her young, her safety is cared for. Nor is there any instance that the young ravens, in a state of nature, ever perished for want of food, or the mountain hind succumbed under her labour-pains. And, as we find the same careful superintendence extended to every race of animals, it demonstrates plainly, and beyond contradiction, that there is a Providence which takes cognizance of all creatures in existence, and assigns to each species its instincts and capabilities, so as to endow it with the utmost perfection of which its nature admits; and that this Providence does not wrong any of its creatures, or withhold from it the means of reaching the utmost perfection which it possibly can attain.

In man, or the individuals composing the human species, we find a far greater diversity of mental powers and capabilities than what distinguishes the different kinds of animals from each other: So that while one man seems scarce a degree above the speechless brutes, another almost

approximates to the angelic intelligences. And we infer that, as Providence extends its superintendence in various degrees to different animals, there must likewise be a gradation, corresponding with the mental and moral perfection of the individual, in the superintendence which Providence deigns to extend to mankind. The influence of this providential superintendence is sometimes made known to the pious by a direct communication of the Deity, either in a prophetic vision or in a dream. Of the former we find an instance in the case of Abraham, to whom the command was directly communicated, "Go forth from thy land and thy native place, and thy father's house, unto the land which I will shew thee. And I will make thee to be a great nation, and I will bless thee, and I will make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless thee, and those who curse thee will I curse, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii. 2, 3.) Here Providence was pleased to announce its superintendence, and to declare that the future guidance of Abraham, and the events which were to befall him, were under its own direct and immediate cognizance. That similar communications are sometimes imparted in a dream, is instanced in the case of Abimelech, king of Gerar, who had seized on Sarah, the wife of Abraham, as we read: "And the Lord came to Abimelech in a dream at night, and said to him, Behold, thou must die, because of the woman thou hast taken; for she is the wife of a man." (Genesis xx. 3.) Here Providence was pleased to announce the cognizance taken of Abimelech's action, and the punishment that would result therefrom. The distinction made between Abimelech and Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who also had seized on Sarah, shows us that there is a gradation in the superintendence of Providence. To the former, who was pious, an intimation of his wrong and a caution of its consequences were afforded: Whereas the latter, who was impious, was at once visited with the chastisement due to his crime, as it is written: "And the Lord afflicted Pharaoh

with great plagues, and also his household, on account of Sarai, the wife of Abram." (Genesis xii. 17.) Sometimes this superintendence of Providence is not communicated to the individual directly, but through the instrumentality of another, a prophetic messenger, as was the case with Barak the son of Abinoam, to whom the prophetess Deborah communicated the command of the Deity, as we read: "And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam, from Kedesh-Naphtali; and she said to him, Go, and march toward mount Tabor; and thou shalt take with thee ten thousand men from the children of Zebulun and Naphtali: And I will draw against thee to the brook Kedron, Sisera the chief of the hosts of Jabin, with all his chariots and his multitude, and I will give him into thy hand" (Judges iv. 6, 7.) Similar communications were made to Eli and to Saul, through the instrumentality of Samuel: As we read, "And Samuel told him all the words, and concealed nothing from him." (1 Sam. iii. 18.) And again, "And Samuel said to Saul, Stand still, and I will tell thee what the Lord said to me last night," &c. (1 Sam. xv. 16.) In all these instances it pleased Providence to make known its direct superintendence, and to predict those events which it had taken under its own immediate guidance. There is, however, another not less direct but less plain and evident communication, when the superintendence of Providence is announced not by prophetic vision or dream, but by an inward impulse or presentiment, which leads man on to do what otherwise he would not have thought of doing. As an instance of this operation of Providence by impulse, we mention Abigail, the wife of Nabal, who went forth to meet David as he was marching with his men to slay her husband and destroy his house; for David recognised the impulse under which she was acting to be Divine, when he said to her, "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, who has sent thee this day to meet me." (1 Samuel xxv. 32.) Similar instances are also found in the various judges, who from time to time arose to save Israel from the hands of

their oppressors: As we read, "And the Lord raised a helper unto the children of Israel, who assisted them," &c. (Judges iii. 9, 10.) These impulses are, however, not always for good, but sometimes they are caused by the retributive justice of Providence to bring a sinner to condign punishment. As, for instance, Ahab, king of Israel, who went forth to Ramoth-Gilead to battle, that there he might meet his death, a due punishment for the murder of Naboth: As it is written, "And the Lord said, Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead," &c. (1 Kings xxii. 20.)

Sometimes the superintendence of Providence is made manifest in the afflictions which befall an individual, either that he may thereby be brought to reflect on his past conduct, and repent of his transgressions, or as an expiation for some sin or sins he has committed. This latter species of affliction is a touchstone which puts to the test, and lays open, the true character of a man's worship of, and obedience to, the Deity. If man is a worshipper from love, he submits to the afflictions which befall him, with resignation and patience, out of pure love and affection to his Creator: But if his worship is founded on a dread of punishment and an expectation of reward, he becomes impatient under his sufferings; when he finds the punishment inflicted and the reward withheld, no motives for his worship remain, he speaks reproachfully of the Deity, and impugns his attributes. Such was the case with Job: His worship was based on the fear of punishment and the expectation of reward; therefore, when his fears became realized and his expectations disappointed, he became impatient, could not bring himself to submit with resignation to the afflictions with which the Deity visited him, and eventually launched forth in reproachful and unfounded accusations against the Divine justice. But that these afflictions were a test, and a communication of the providential superintendence of the Deity, was proved to him by Elihu. In his first argument, he says, "In dreams and visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on them and they slumber

on their beds; then does He open the ears of men, chastises and affrights them: 'To turn man from his undertakings, to protect him from pride. He saves his soul from perdition, and his life from falling by the sword. He chastises him with afflictions on his bed,' &c. (Job xxxiii. 15—19.) His meaning is, that sometimes the providential superintendence of the Deity is made manifest to man in a dream, which cautions and exhorts to abstain from his evil purposes, while at other times the same superintendence manifests itself by severe and painful afflictions, which eventually bring man to a sense of the Divine justice and of his own sinfulness. Therefore Elihu continues, "He prays to God, who is merciful unto him; he sees His face in joyfulness, and restores to man his righteousness. So that he confesses before men and says, I have sinned and have perverted the right, but it availed me nothing." (Job xxxiii. 26, 27.) His meaning is, that when man, thus afflicted, begins to reflect on his past conduct and implores the Divine mercy, the sense of right is restored to him, so that he perceives his own sinfulness, and, confessing that the Lord is just, and his judgments righteous, he acknowledges that his own sins and transgressions have brought upon him the afflictions he endures as a condign punishment, and to expiate his crimes. In his second argument Elihu declares the fact, that sufferings are a touchstone which put to the test the true disposition and sincerity of the worshipper. Accordingly he says, "If they are bound in fetters, and imprisoned in the bonds of affliction, He tells them of their deeds and their sins which have taken the upper hand. He opens their ears to reproof, and tells them to repent of their wrongs. If they hear and serve him, their days will be ended in comfort and their years in happiness: But if they hear him not, they die by the sword and perish unprepared." (Job xxxvi. 8—12.) He commences by saying, "That when afflictions and suffer-

ings befall man, they are ordained by Providence as forcible teachers of virtue and piety; which, while they exhort man to penitence, also serve to lay open his inward disposition. If his worship is sincere, he submits with resignation, and persists in his devoted adherence to the Deity, who rewards him according to the purity of his intentions. If on the contrary his mind is hardened, the afflictions and chastisement with which he is visited, produce no impression on him, and he perishes in his iniquity." He then goes on to say, "The hypocrites break out in anger; they implore not, because He has afflicted them; their soul perisheth in misery and their life in wretchedness: But He redeemeth the humble in their meekness," &c. (Job xxxvi. 13—15.) The hypocrites whose worship is founded on an impure motive, either fear of punishment or hope of reward, become furious when afflictions befall them, and arraign the Divine justice, (as Job did,) they no longer deem it worth while to continue their outward worship or to implore the Deity, because the chastisement they endured has realized those fears and held up the vanity of those hopes, which alone caused them to worship the Lord. Thus their inward disposition is manifested, and they meet with the reward due to their hypocrisy. Whereas the humble-minded, whose worship is founded in love, submits with resignation and love to the will of the Deity, and perseveres in his meekness and endurance until it pleases the Deity to redeem him; and as his sufferings have been the touchstone which proves the purity of his devotion, He rewards him. But should any man be so perverse as to consider the afflictions which befall him as merely accidental, Holy Writ cautions him that he is guilty of a dangerous error, in the one denunciation, "If you will consider my inflictions as accidents or casual, my wrath will pursue you, until you discover that your sufferings are not casual, but that they are chastisements inflicted by me." (Levit. xxvi. 21.)

(To be continued.)

III. THE JEWISH KINGDOM OF THE CHASARS, AND THE BOOK COSRI.

(Concluded from page 128.)

"THAT he had endeavoured to find a trusty messenger, whom he could despatch with letters to Chasaria: That he had confided this mission, which few were willing to undertake, to a certain R. Isaac bar Nathan, whom he had furnished with money, and also with recommendations to the imperial court at Constantinople; but that, after an absence of six months, this messenger had returned without reaching the place of his destination, because, as he stated, the sea was only navigable at certain seasons, and impassable at all other times of the year, through the great storms which prevailed; and that a journey by land was equally impossible, in consequence of the disturbed state of the intervening tribes. That he had felt greatly grieved at this miscarriage, and had subsequently requested some Palestine Jews to take charge of his letters, who had promised to forward the same by way of Nisibis and Armenia, when the ambassadors of the king of Gubal * had arrived; that in their train were two Jewish Rabbies, Mar Saul and Mar Joseph, who had undertaken, and faithfully promised, that the present letter should reach its destination.

"He prays the king would be pleased to answer his letter through his secretary, and give him every information respecting certain legends of an ancient emigration of Jews from the neighbourhood of Mount Seir, (not the one mentioned in the Bible,) a colony of whom are said to have settled in a far distant country, which he believes was Chasaria. That, moreover, it would please the king to furnish him with certain intelligence respecting the land of the Chasars, its constitution, government, inhabitants, and productions; the territories which were subject to his sway, the wars he and his Jewish predecessors had carried on, the history of the nation, their

language, and whatever else it might be desirable to know respecting them.

"He regrets that all his endeavours to find a certain Mar Amram, who, about six years before, had arrived in Spain, and been well received at court, and who, as he had since been informed, was a native Chasar, had been unavailing; that, therefore, he and his brethren, who were so greatly interested in obtaining certain information respecting their illustrious brother, the king of the Chasars, had no other hopes of obtaining that information, except his royal condescension would deign to answer this letter."

There is every reason to believe that this letter is genuine; indeed the intrinsic evidence it affords has satisfied the most learned critics of its authenticity. It is said, that some time afterwards king Joseph of Chasaria replied to R. Hassai, that he descended from a long series of kings, of whom he was the twelfth who professed the Jewish faith. That his predecessor, Bulan, had, by nocturnal vision, been commanded to embrace the Jewish religion, which he had publicly done, after having, in the manner we have already stated, ascertained the real preference of this religion before all others. That the nation of the Chasars descended from Japhet and Togarmah, and had therefore no community of descent or affinity with the Jews, except in the person of their great progenitor, Noah; but that the royal family adhered to the laws and traditions of the Jews as taught by the Babylonian and Palestine Rabbies. He then enters into a glowing description of the power and prosperity of his country, his numerous vassals, mighty armies, &c. This reply, however, is generally acknowledged to be a forgery, and indeed bears intrinsic proof of being such. We therefore deem the above short extract sufficient, and only mention this fictitious reply inasmuch as it gave occasion to one of the most learned Rabbies of Spain, R. Jehuda Halevi,

* Explained by the additional words, *Al Zokolow*, which, however, are equally incomprehensible to us.

to compose a series of conversations, purporting to have been carried on between Bulan, the first Jewish king of the Chasars, and his rabbinical instructor, in which the former states his doubts, and argues with the latter respecting the tenets of the Jewish faith. The instructive replies he receives to his questions form a most complete and philosophical defence of the Jewish religion. This work, which was originally written in Arabic, and subsequently translated into Hebrew, is known by the name of "the Cusri," or "Cosar." It would be wrong to impute to the author the intention of holding out his book as

the actual history of the conversion of Bulan, as his only intention was, to submit philosophical truths, and the views of himself and of his times, in a manner more diversified and pleasant to the reader than at that period was customary.

The historical fact, that a series of Jewish kings did reign over the Chasars, has been called in question by Basnage, but has been fully established by the more extensive learning and information of Karamsin, in his *History of the Russian Empire*, vol. i *

* From JOST's *Geschichte der Israeliten*, vol. 6, page 98.

IV. CUSTOMS AND OBSERVANCES OF THE JEWS.

שבועות, THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

WHILE the Israelites inhabited the land which a merciful and just Providence had bestowed on Abraham, as an inheritance to his descendants, they were commanded that their male population should appear before the Lord their God, in the place consecrated and set apart to his worship, at certain seasons, three times in every year. The times of their so appearing were fixed at the three great national festivals: 1. פסח, or "Passover," commemorating their liberation from the Egyptian bondage. 2. שבועות, or "Pentecost," to commemorate their being constituted a nation, and appointed to be the peculiar and chosen people of God. And 3. סוכות, "the feast of tabernacles," to commemorate their peaceful enjoyment of the promised land, and to express their gratitude at the fulness and abundance of Divine bounty, which poured forth its blessings over them. The first * and the last || of these three great festivals having already, in their season, called forth our attention, we now complete the annual cycle of festivals, by submitting to our readers the following remarks on the חג השבועות, "the festival of pentecost."

The origin of this festival is in the commandments of the Divine law.

* Vide Hebrew Review, vol. i. pp. 45, 62.

|| Vide Hebrew Review, vol. ii., pp. 13, 27.

"Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: Begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God, with a tribute of a free-will offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the Lord thy God, according as the Lord thy God has blessed thee; and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widows that are among you, in the place which the Lord thy God has chosen to place his name; and thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and thou shalt observe and do these statutes." (Deut. xvi. 9-12.) "Also in the days of the first-fruits, when ye bring a new meat-offering unto the Lord, after your weeks be out, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work; but ye shall offer a burnt-offering," &c. (Num. xxviii. 26.) From the counting of weeks the festival derives its name, חג השבועות, being literally a "festival of weeks." Its rank among the three principal festivals of the year is assigned to it by another commandment; namely, "Three times a year shall all thy males appear before the

Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose: In the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God, which he hath given thee." (Deut. xvi. 16, 17.)

While thus the origin and institution of the festival are found in Holy Writ, and its observance is strictly enjoined, the cause of its institution, and the great event it commemorates, have been preserved to us by tradition, and embodied in the oral law. Accordingly we read, "The Rabbies transmitted."* On the sixth day of the month the Decalogue was given to the Israelites. R. Jose said, on the seventh of the month; Rabbah said the Israelites came to Mount Sinia on the ראש חודש, or "first day of the month;" for when Moses spoke to the children of Israel in Egypt, he said, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you." (Exodus xii. 2.) And when the Israelites arrived at Sinai, it is said, "In the third month after the children of Israel went forth out of the land of Egypt, even on this day, they came to the desert of Sinai." (Exodus xix. 1.) As in the first instance the command was given on the first day of the month, so, likewise, in the second instance, the day of their arrival was the first of the month. The law was given to the Israelites on the sabbath-day; for in the Decalogue it is said, "Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy." (Exodus xix. 8.) And Moses subsequently said to the people, "Remember ye the day," &c. As in the one case he meant the middle of the Sabbath-day, so did he likewise in

the other case. The difference between R. Jose and the Rabbies, the former naming the seventh, while the latter appointed the sixth day of the month, as the one on which the law was given to Israel on Sinai, arose from their differing in their computation which day of the week was the first of the month. R. Jose said it was on the first day, Sunday. On this first day no communication was made to the Israelites, but they were left to repose from the fatigues of their march. On the second day of the week the communication was made to them that they were to become a kingdom of priests. On the third day of the week the command was given to set bounds round about the people. (Exodus xix. 12.) On the fourth day they were commanded to separate from their wives during two days, and on the seventh day, which was the sabbath-day, the law was given. The Rabbies, on the contrary, said that the first day of the month was on the second day of the week: That on this second day no communication was made to the Israelites, but they were left to repose from the fatigues of their march. The third day of the week the communication was made to them that they should become a kingdom of priests. On the fourth day the commandment was given to part off the mountain. On the fifth day of the week the separation was commanded, and on the seventh day of the week, the sabbath, which was the sixth of the month, the law was given to Israel; and the decision adopted the opinion of the Rabbies. Accordingly the sixth day of Sivan is observed throughout Israel, as being the day on which the law was given at Sinai. (Talmud, treatise, *Sabbath*, folio 86.)

According to this authentic tradition, which in its origin ascends to the remote and glorious period when the Deity was pleased to reveal himself to his people on Mount Sinai, and which, together with the account of the wonderful events which accompanied that revelation, has been transmitted from father to son in uninterrupted succession, we find that the festival of weeks, or pentecost, was instituted to commemorate

* According to the learned Translator of the Talmud, Dr. M. Pinner, of Berlin, the expression so frequently used in the Talmud, רבו רבנן, "*Tanu Rabanan*," invariably denotes such doctrines and traditions as from the earliest times had been preserved and had reached the Talmudic Rabbies, and which only were recorded after a strict investigation of their truth and authenticity. This expression must, therefore, always be rendered by "The Rabbies transmitted."—*Vide Intr. to Comp.*, p. 18.

the most important fact recorded in our history; a fact on which not only our own religious system, but those of all other nations who confess the authenticity and Divine origin of the Mosaic dispensation, are founded. This festival ought, therefore, in reality, to rank foremost amongst the three great feasts which the Deity was pleased to institute and command his people to observe; for unless the events which this festival commemorates had taken place, unless that complete and perfect system of religious, moral, and social legislation, which the Deity vouchsafed to reveal to our ancestors at Mount Sinai had been made known to and accepted by them; unless they, through that acceptance, had been constituted a peculiar and chosen people to the Deity, a nation of priests and instructors to the rest of mankind; unless all this had taken place, revealed religion would have been deficient of its strongest proofs; the perfection and happiness of the human race would have been deprived of its strongest bulwark against the inroads of infidelity and vice; and our nation would not have held that high office, which, once conferred on them, they have never since been deprived of; namely, the important office of being the attesting witnesses to the truths of revelation, and to the authenticity of those glorious, perfect, and immutable laws, which alone secure the true happiness, and uphold the otherwise frail structure, of the social fabric. Well has, therefore, the importance of this festival been asserted and proved by the learned and pious R. Isaac ben Moses Arama in his book עקדת יצחק "the Ligation of Isaac;" the following extract from which we submit to our readers:—

"The great and glorious day on which the Deity made manifest His omnipotence, and wrought His wondrous signs on the tyrannic oppressors of his people, beheld the liberation of Israel, and their departure from the iron house of bondage. They had been low, despised, and crushed to the earth, beneath the cruel yoke of a tyrant; but now they went forth to liberty, to honour, and renown, with songs of gladness, harps, cym-

bals, and the exulting strains of warlike music. Not as the captive leaves his dungeon, his knees tottering and his spirit broken: No! the departure of the Israelites from Egypt was of a very different kind; their spirits were high, and their souls exulting. Vengeance had been done on their foes, they had triumphed over their oppressors; and Holy Writ affords its testimony to the frame of mind in which the Israelites left Egypt, when it states: 'And the children of Israel went out of Egypt with a high hand.' (Exod. xiv. 8.) Their final deliverance was crowned in the most signal manner, by the destruction of Pharaoh and his savage hosts in the Red Sea; when the Lord fought the battles of his people, and Moses and the children of Israel sung their glorious hymn of triumph to the Lord. 'These glorious days of redemption, on which our ancestors left Egypt, and were finally delivered from their relentless foes, are commemorated by all the generations of Israel, in consequence of an everlasting statute, which enjoins the due observance of the festival of our liberation, פסח, 'the passover.' But what was the motive and purpose which caused so wonderful an interposition of Providence in favour of the children of Israel? Had they not adopted the impious and barbarous customs of their oppressors? Were they not immersed in idolatrous observances, and addicted to the worship of stick and stone like their Egyptian rulers? So that each man served his idol and performed the abominable rites which Egyptian idolatry imposed, as our Rabbies justly observe in the Talmud: 'These (the Israelites) were idolaters, as well as those: (the Egyptians:) Why then was so great a difference made between them? And how came Israel to be favoured by the Divine grace with so great, signal, and notorious a deliverance from, and victory over, their foes?' To all these questions we reply, The object was to bring Israel to Mount Sinai: The motive and purpose was, there to bestow on them the law, the giving of which we celebrate on the feast of pentecost. It was on account of the events which took place on this sixth day of the third month,

after their exit from Egypt, that the Lord vouchsafed miraculously to deliver and preserve them : For on that day the Israelites stood on Mount Sinai, and there heard the ten commandments uttered by the voice of Omnipotence, as Holy Writ relates : 'Moses spoke, and the Lord answered him with a loud voice ;' (Exodus xix. 19;) which plainly tells us that, as Moses did speak in the hearing of all the children of Israel, the voice of the Lord was equally heard by all. On this day the covenant was sealed between God and his people ; He giving and they accepting the law : And after the ten commandments had on this day been made known to them, Moses ascended the mount, where he remained forty days, and received from the Lord the rest of the law and the covenant.

"If we reflect on the nature of the events which this day commemorates, and on the degree of sanctity due to the day itself, it will become evident to us that the *חג שבועות* 'feast of weeks,' or pentecost, ought to take precedence of all the other festivals of the year ; nor is there any other day, the observance of which, reason so absolutely enjoins as that of this festival. For has it ever been done or heard of among all the nations of the earth, that the Lord should take unto himself one people from the midst of another by the greatest signs, wonders, and miracles ; and instead of this people so singled out being low, despised, wretchedly poor, and groaning under the heavy yoke of slavery, they by the will of the Deity, who led them forth from the house of bondage and proclaimed them free, were exalted above all the nations of the earth which then existed. So that there was not any nation or kingdom which excelled them either in might and power, or in wisdom and knowledge, or in the system of government proper to a wise and understanding nation. Nor was this sufficient for the Divine bounty ; but the Deity still further vouchsafed, through Moses his servant, to spread over his chosen people the shining light of his law, the sacred law which we still obey, and the Divine origin of which is acknowledged by all nations, and con-

fessed at the furthest ends of the earth, wherever people dwell who believe in the Lord God, Creator of the universe ; and though these nations be not of the seed of Israel, yet all their wise men do homage to the Divine source from which the law of Moses proceeded ; and believing in the existence of God, his unity and providence, they all bear testimony to the purity and perfection of the law He revealed to his people on Mount Sinai, and confess that those laws revealed to the Israelites on Mount Sinai were commanded by the Lord, who visibly appeared and spoke to His people, pouring forth the fulness of His prophetic Spirit on Moses ; and that the laws He then commanded are the most holy, pure, and perfect which man can obey. Nehemiah when relating the manifold mercies the Lord has conferred on his people, sums all up by saying, 'Thou didst descend on Mount Sinai, and speak to them from the heavens ; there thou didst give them righteous judgments, a law of truth, and good statutes and commandments.' (Neh. ix. 13.) This law it was which raised Israel above the other nations of the earth, to be an holy people ; for experience proves to us that no other nation has held so steadfastly by their faith during thousands of years as the Israelites, who still remain firm in their belief, and persevere in their obedience to the laws of God, without repining or becoming weary. How many massacres and persecutions have they endured ! How many attempts have been made utterly to destroy and annihilate them ! But the Israelites are a 'stiff-necked people ;' they still persevere in their duty, firm and unmovable like walls of copper or pillars of iron, and have their life and being solely in the strength of their faith, and in their holy law. Reason therefore requires that due observance should be devoted to the sanctity of the day on which this all-important law was given, and that therefore precedence ought to be yielded to the pentecost, by all the other festivals. For though the pass-over, the feast of our perpetual liberation takes precedence in point of time, yet the events it commemorates

were but the means to a particular end, namely, the conferring of the Divine law on the children of Israel; in order to do which the Lord vouchsafed to afford his wondrous aid to liberate them; and as it is in accordance with reason and common sense to maintain that the end is more valuable and important than the means employed to attain that end, the natural consequence is, that the precedence is due to that festival which records the end attained, above those which only commemorate the means employed. Accordingly we find that when the Deity first appeared to Moses, and sent him forth on his mission to release Israel, He told him, at once to make known to them that they were to receive laws, statutes, and commandments from Him at Mount Sinai, and that on this condition He would redeem them from the oppression of their taskmasters: As we read, 'When thou bringest out the people from Egypt, ye shall serve the Lord on this mount.' (Exod. iii. 12.)

"In order properly to observe the sanctity of this day, the Lord commanded us to number fifty days from the morning of the passover until the morn of pentecost: These fifty days he appointed, in order that Israel might purify their hearts and cleanse their thoughts from the leaven of Egyptian superstitions, and the foul habits of idolatry which they had taken up in their state of slavery: So that their hearts and minds being properly prepared and purified, they might in some degree be worthy of the holy law which was about to be confided to them. Our Rabbies alluded to this interval of mental purification and preparation in the following appropriate simile:—'R. Simon, the son of Jochai, said, When the Israelites went out of Egypt, whom were they like? They were like a king's son, who had got up from a bed of illness, to which he had been long confined. The king's servants say to their royal master, 'Let thy son come and dine at thy table.' But he answers them, 'My son has not yet recovered his pristine vigour and comeliness: Let him live retired for three months, and then he shall appear in

public, and dine at my table.' Thus likewise, when Israel went out of Egypt, the ministering angels addressed the Deity, and said, 'Lord of the universe, the time is come that Israel should receive the law;' but He (blessed be HE!) answered them, 'My children are not yet recovered from their slavery amongst the lime and bricks; but let them repose a little while, and then will I give them the law.' In this parable, our Rabbies explain to us the delay which intervened from the exit out of Egypt, until the giving of the law to the Israelites; namely, that it was occasioned by the diseased state of their souls and the necessity to purify their thoughts, and remove from their minds the foul taints of Egyptian example and corruption. It is not for us to inquire why the Deity fixed on the precise period of fifty days, neither more nor less? Such a question would argue but little wisdom on the part of the inquirer; for whenever any fixed and determined time is appointed, no room is left to ask, why just so many days and no more? as that question not only becomes useless, but is interminable. But doubtless the Divine wisdom knew that the space of time intervening between passover and pentecost, and the instruction of Moses,—who would not fail gradually to teach them, and impress their minds with those sentiments it beloveth them to entertain—were sufficient properly to prepare them that they might appear in the presence of the Lord God of hosts, there to receive His holy law."

Thus far the clear and masterly illustration of the learned and pious R. Isaac ben Moses Arama; an illustration which enters so fully into the merits and importance of this festival, that it leaves us nothing to add. We would, however, recommend our readers once more to peruse the arguments made use of by R. Joseph Albo, in his book *Sepher Ikkarim*, first division, chapters xix. and xx.* where he proves that the giving of the law at Sinai, and the manner in which it was given, afford the strongest proofs of the truth of

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. I., p. 51 et seq.

revealed religion: Nor can we close our article better than by repeating his words:—"The prophet says, 'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am He! Before me there was no God, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour. I have declared and have saved, and I have shewed when no strange God was amongst you; therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.'" (Isaiah xliii. 10—12.) The meaning of which is: This nation—the Israelites, pro-

duce six hundred thousand credible witnesses, whose evidence is conclusive as to what they have seen, heard, and experienced by the demonstration of their senses, when they heard the voice of the Lord command the observance of the Decalogue, and on the strength of this conclusive evidence it must be believed without doubt or hesitation of any kind, that this law of Moses is really and truly revealed by the Deity." (*Sepher Ikkarim*: Div. I. chap. xx.)

This conclusive evidence we perpetuate by our annual observance of the חג השבועות, or "the feast of weeks."

V. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 144.)

THE foundation of a new school would of itself have been an event of importance to a people so eager in the acquisition of knowledge as the Jews, who consider learning not only as a desirable attainment, but as meritorious in a religious point of view: But when we further take into consideration the particular circumstances under which R. Moses founded his school, and which at short intervals succeeded that foundation, we will find that to the western Jews this was the most important and beneficial event which, short of their restoration to independence and their own land, could at that time have occurred to them. The schools of the east, which had so long been the only seats of learning to the Jews, were on the decline. That at Sura was, as we have already stated, closed; and that of Pumbeditha was in a lingering condition: Upheld only by the activity and vigour of an aged man and his son, R. Sherira Gaon and R. Hai, it likewise hastened to its end. Even before the formation of the Spanish school, the dissensions between the chiefs of the eastern seats of learning, the frequent infractions on their rights and revenues, by the rapacity of the caliphs, and the want of security which threatened the students on visiting these schools, had combined greatly to lessen the number of western visitors, and to impede the progress

of learning in the west. And though, on the final close of the schools on the borders of the Euphrates, it was to be expected that many eminent teachers and talented students would have found their way to the west, and become the founders of new schools, it remains questionable whether these schools would have made so rapid a progress as did that of Cordova under R. Moses. Stimulated as it was by a spirit of emulation to equal the great and ancient seat of learning at Pumbeditha, and encouraged by the government which felt an interest in the formation of an establishment at home which dispensed its numerous Jewish subjects from seeking instruction abroad, and to which it therefore extended a degree of protection, and favour, that under different circumstances it might not have been inclined to grant. The existence of the eastern schools was continued sufficiently long to give a stimulus to the new establishment in Spain: When the former became extinct, the latter was not only in a condition to supply its place, but to raise the fame of Jewish learning to the highest degree it ever reached.

Through the establishment of the schools in Spain, the dependence in which the eastern Jews had held their western brethren ceased, and the relative situation in which for so many centuries they had stood to each other was virtually dissolved.

So that when, through the decapitation of Hiskiah, the last Resh Gelutha and head of the school at Pumbeditha, that school became extinct, the western Jews were not sensibly affected by the catastrophe. The influence of the Spanish seats of learning spread on the one side over the African shore, while on the other side it crossed the Pyrennees, and extended itself over Septimania, Provence, and even unto the Rhine, along the borders of which river most of the German Jews had their habitations. Jewish learning became indigenous in Spain, and made rapid progress. It gave to the Spanish Jews a peculiarity of character, which, in process of time, formed them into a distinct and separate community. However great their influence may have been on the other European Jews, these latter could not, during many centuries, raise themselves to that eminence of merit and dignity which the former occupied. This difference between them affords us the most convincing proof of the great influence which the consciousness of freedom, or the feeling of degradation and slavery, exercises on the minds and actions of men. Thus we find the Spanish Jews of the middle ages perfectly similar to their brethren in Germany, France, or England of that period, as far as their religious doctrines and observances are concerned: But they are animated by another spirit: Freedom, and the feeling of their own dignity, assign to them a station in the scale of society which their brethren could not attain; and obtained for them a degree of respect and consideration, which, notwithstanding great riches and considerable influence, which at various periods they enjoyed, the Jews in the rest of Europe could not acquire. While the former maintained their standing in society, even to the last hour of their sojourn in Spain, the French and German Jews were sinking lower and lower; so that the common catastrophe, which at brief intervals befel these two races of Jews, creates in our breast widely different sensations. While we scarcely

know how to pity the French usurer, torn from his money-bags, and driven from a land, which to him had been a site of the most abject degradation; the most inhuman oppression, because we know and feel that wherever he turns his wandering steps he cannot be more truly miserable than in the land he, till then, had inhabited, and that any change must to him be for the better; while, influenced by these feelings, we scarce know how to pity the Jews exiled from France, the noblest sympathies of our nature are excited at the fate of the Spanish Jews: Forced, through the fanatical cruelty of a crafty priest, and a bigotted tyrant, to abandon their native land—the land they and their fathers had adorned through many a generation; to bid adieu to those abodes which the learning, virtue, and public influence of their ancestors had rendered illustrious; and forsaking the soil which, during so many centuries, had afforded them liberty and protection, they are compelled to seek shelter in those countries where their unfortunate brethren had experienced nought but oppression and slavery: So different are the feelings excited within our breast at the fate of the Spanish Jews from those at similar catastrophes which befel the Jews in various other parts of Europe. We are, however, anticipating the course of events, and must therefore retrace our steps to the point whence we digressed.

R. Moses was acknowledged as chief of the Spanish Jews, by Hescham, the last caliph of the Omniade dynasty, who reigned in Spain. R. Hasdai, the son of Isaac, (whose letter to the king of the Chasars we on a former occasion inserted,) stood high in the royal favour. He was the patron of learning and learned men, and his influence supported the Babylonish Rabbi, and confirmed his authority. R. Moses became connected with the principal families in Cordova, having married his son Henech to a daughter of the wealthy and distinguished house of the Beni Phaliag.

(To be continued.)

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I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

מ"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 149.)

He * used to say, "Man is beloved, for he was created in the image of God; but that love was greater still which made it known to him that he was created in the image of God; as it is said, 'In the image of God He made man.'" (III. 18.)

COMMENTARY. *Man is beloved, for he was created in the image of God*—The subsequent maxims of our teacher apply to Israelites only: Thus he says, "Beloved are Israel, in that they are called the children of God," &c.; and again, "Beloved are Israel, to whom was given the delectable Instrument, wherewith the world was created," &c.; which maxims we shall hereafter explain. But this first of a series of apophthegms on the same subject does not apply to the Israelite only, but extends its meaning alike to the whole human race, and therefore he uses the generic name אדם, "man," to teach us that the whole human race are alike favoured in this respect; and as they are all created in the image of God, it is their imperative duty to serve the Lord and to obey His commandments; to abstain from what he prohibits, and to perform what he enjoins. Those commandments are contained in the laws of the Noachidæ, which are binding on all the nations of the earth; and the reason for observing which is, in Holy Writ, stated to be, because in the image of God he made man. (Gen. ix. 6.) That the word אדם, "man," indicates the human race generally, and is not restricted to any particular nation, is proved by Holy Writ in numerous instances: And though there are nations in the world who have not yet learned to

give glory to God on high, "who created the heavens, the earth, and all that they contain;" though these nations worship idols—the works of human hands, and do that which is abominable and sinful; nevertheless, they are created "in the image of God," participators in all the great and glorious prerogatives of humanity, however corrupt their souls and perverse their conduct. Accordingly, our Rabbies say, "At the creation of the universe, the Creator knew that among the human race whom He was about to call into being, some would be righteous and good, while others would be wicked and bad; nevertheless, He created the world, and gifted man with a living soul: And He who upholds the world will likewise judge it in his own good time." The whole human race—the bad as well as the good, are included in the generic name אדם, "man," and created in the image of God. Those who are virtuous and upright in their conduct, and obey the Divine commandments enjoined on the Noachidæ, are beloved by the Deity, for they are alike his creatures, the objects of His parental care, on whom he has not only bestowed life and existence, but likewise the capacity of being happy in the obedience of his will: Nor is it the good alone to whom his universal bounty is extended; but even the bad, while they provoke his jus-

* R. Akeebah.

tice, experience his mercy. This is beautifully expressed by our Rabbies in the allegory of Shemoth Rabbah, c. xv. :—"On the night that Pharaoh and his hosts perished in the Red Sea, the ministering angels wished to join Moses and the Israelites in their ode of triumph; but the Holy One (blessed be He!) reproved them and said, 'Can ye rejoice at the destruction of my creatures who perish in the sea?'" Their meaning is, that even when hard-hearted sinful perverseness and impenitence have reached that degree which calls forth the exercise of the Divine justice, and brings down condign punishment on the head of the offender, even then the All-merciful does not forget that these offenders are his creatures, whom he called into being and made in his image.

The commandment in Holy Writ, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," (Leviticus xix. 18,) is general in its terms; the reason assigned is, "because he is כְּנֶפֶשׁ, like thyself;" but to what degree that love is to extend, and whether it is to be bestowed in the same degree on all men, Holy Writ does not expressly state. From the reason which is given for this command, we are, however, justified in declaring that the more perfect the resemblance is between us and our neighbour, the greater will be the degree of love which we are to entertain towards him. The fundamental rule is that we are to love all men because they are, like us, created in the image of God. Therefore we are not to vex, injure, or oppress them, or on any occasion to do what is unpleasant and painful to them: As Hillel interpreted the Divine command.* And though his interpretation seems at first only to impose on us a negative duty, namely, not to do any thing to our neighbour which we should not like to be done unto ourselves, yet if we enter into the true spirit of this interpretation, we find that it conveys the positive command to practise active benevolence towards our neighbour whenever he stands in need of our aid; for as it would be most painful to ourselves to be abandoned in the hour of distress—be that distress

mental or bodily—and left uncouraged to struggle with adverse fortune, as this would be most painful to ourselves, we are not to inflict a similar pain on our neighbour. While thus our loving-kindness and friendly aid are due to all mankind, because they are like us in the important circumstance that they are created in the image of God; a greater degree of our love is due to the Israelite, who resembles us, not only in this one circumstance, but who is also like us in being a descendant of Abraham, belonging to the chosen people of God, and who with us is a guardian of His laws, statutes, and commandments, which the Lord has deigned to make known to mankind, a joint-witness to the great truths of Divine revelation. Thus the more perfect degree of resemblance and equality produces a corresponding degree of love, which, if we are virtuous, and worshipping the Lord from love and affection, without any admixture of base and selfish motives, will in its greatest fulness be bestowed on him who is truly pious and wise, and who therefore approaches us nearest in that similarity which Holy Writ assigns as the cause why we ought to love our neighbour. Know, moreover, that the word רֵעִי "friend, or neighbour" includes the whole human race, as all men are friends and neighbours to each other. Be not therefore led into the erroneous opinion that by the word רֵעִי, "thy neighbour," is meant thy own particular associate, who is united to thee by the bonds of affinity and amity, or by the exchange of kindness: For Holy Writ on another occasion uses the words, "If a man beats רֵעֵהוּ, 'his neighbour,'" and "If a man waylays רֵעֵהוּ, 'his neighbour,'" (Exodus xxi. 14—18) and many other similar instances, in which it is evident that Holy Writ does not intend to express men who are united in friendship; but, on the contrary, who stand in a very different relation to each other. But as thus רֵעִי is the most comprehensive word that could be employed, indicating alike our friends, and those with whom we are not on a footing of amity, Holy Writ uses it on the

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., p. 148.

occasion of a command, which is alike to extend to the whole human race. And though it is not our intention here to explain the wording of Holy Writ in the various precepts which accompany this great commandment of love, yet we cannot forbear to call the attention of our readers to the sixth chapter of Leviticus, 17th and 18th verses, where we read, "Thou shalt not hate, אֹהֵב, 'thy brother.' Thou shalt reprove and exhort, עֲמִיתְךָ, 'thy countryman.' Thou shalt not revenge nor bear resentment against, בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ, 'the children of thy people.'" Each of these prohibitions is on the face of it limited to the Israelites; brethren, as the descendants of one progenitor; countrymen, as living under the same social compact; and, of one people, as selected by the Deity from among the nations of earth. But when he concludes the series of commandments with that great and fundamental precept, which he intends to be the climax of his legislation, he says, "Thou shalt love, רֵעֶךָ, 'thy friend or neighbour,'" &c., to denote that this last command is to know no limit, but to be extended to every member of the human race. While therefore the preceding three epithets are only applied to Israelites (except the first, "brother," which is applied to the Edomites,* who actually were the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob: And it is remarkable that when the Israelites are commanded not to hate him, the expression is, "because he is thy brother,"||) the expression, רֵעֶךָ, "neighbour," is used towards other nations who have no affinity with Israel, as for instance: "Let them borrow each from רֵעֵדוֹ, his neighbour," (Exod. xi. 2,) by which appellation the Egyptians are designated. Thus it is proved that the command, "to love," is universal, and extends to the whole human race. We are well aware that some of our Rabbies have entertained a different opinion, and have limited the precept, "to love our neighbour," to the Israelites only, in the same manner as the

three preceding commandments which we have already enumerated. They found their opinion on an erroneous explanation of the words of the prophet, "And I will give my sheep, the sheep of my pastures," אֶרְבִּם, "ye are men," where, by throwing the emphasis on the word, "ye," they infer, that, as the expression, אֶרְבִּם, "men," is here applied to Israel in particular, so does our teacher (R. Akeebah) when he says, "Man is beloved," likewise apply the word to Israel only. But this opinion is altogether untenable, as has already been demonstrated by the learned author of the *Tossaphoth Iom Tov*, (of blessed memory,) who, in refuting their far-fetched assertion justly observes, "The opinion they advance is an explanation of an explanation." He also supports his argument by quoting from Holy Writ the words addressed to the sons of Noah: "For in the image of God he made man," (Genesis ix. 6,) where the word, אֶדָם, "man," is not applied to any particular nation or family, but to the whole human race, wherever their habitation may be, or whatever erroneous or vicious customs and doctrines they may have adopted. To decide this dispute, however, we think we can adduce no better or clearer authority than that of the Sacred Scriptures, which, according to our opinion, fully bear us out in our explanation that the word, אֶדָם, applies alike to the whole human race, who are equal, all being gifted with the invaluable prerogative of being made in the image of God. We read in Holy Writ, that when the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai, the Deity proposed to give them laws, and to constitute them his peculiar people. The words recorded in Scripture are: "Ye have seen what I have done to Egypt, and that I have carried you on eagles' wings, and brought you to me. And now if you will hear and obey my voice, and observe my covenant, ye shall be peculiar, לִי, 'unto me,' from amongst all the nations, for, לִי, 'mine,' (or, 'unto me,') is all the earth: But ye shall be, לִי, 'unto me,' a kingdom of priests, and an

* Numbers xx. 14. Deuteronomy ii. 4.

|| Ibid. xxiii. 7.

holy people," &c. (Exodus xix. 4—6.) The expression, "For mine is the whole earth," claims our attention, especially as it seems to have no direct connexion with the succeeding sentence, "But ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests." Accordingly, the word, 'ל, "unto me," which is so repeatedly used in this passage, expresses the value and dignity of the object to which it is prefixed: as, "The Levites shall be, 'ל, "mine," (Numbers viii. 14,) consecrated to me, and therefore superior in rank to the other tribes of Israel. He who is singled out in an assembly of low and mean individuals, and is told that he is to be the first amongst them, may justly doubt whether his real dignity is at all advanced by such an appointment: But he who is singled out in an assembly of distinguished and honourable men, and told that he is to be the first among them, cannot for an instant doubt that his real dignity is greatly advanced by such an appointment. These prefatory remarks we shall now apply to the passage before us. The Lord says to the Israelites, "If you will hear and obey my voice ye shall be peculiar unto me from amongst all the nations." Should you Israelites say, "Will this appointment at all advance our real dignity?" I answer you, "For, 'ל, 'mine,' is the whole earth. All the nations of the

earth are dignified and rendered honourable by being mine, beloved by me, and superior to all other terrestrial creatures, from being made in my image. Among these the most honourable beings of this my nether creation, I choose you to be unto me a kingdom of priests, &c., so that I honourably advance your dignity, by appointing you to be priests or teachers of those who are best beloved among the beings with whom I have filled the earth."

This we conceive to be the true meaning of this remarkable passage of Scripture, which by showing the high estimation in which the whole human race is held by the Creator, fully confirms the explanation which we have given of our teacher's maxim, that all mankind are equals, resembling each other in being endowed with the distinguished advantage and honourable prerogative conferred exclusively on their species, namely, of being created in the image of God. And as love is the offspring of similarity, a sympathy resulting from resemblance, and dependent for the degrees of its ardour on the greater or less perfection of that resemblance, the Divine command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," extends to the whole human race, because all men are, כְּמִוֶּךְ, "like unto thee," in being "made in the image of God."

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 152.)

CHAPTER XII.

IN reply to the objection against the Divine government derived from the prosperity enjoyed by the wicked, as urged in our seventh chapter of this division, we say, that this prosperity may be deduced from four causes, even if we are correct in our estimate, so that he whom we condemn as wicked be really wicked, whilst he whom we consider as righteous be truly so: 1. The wicked may prosper in consequence of the

general decree of Providence; that is to say, by that general decree which dispenses prosperity and welfare to any particular country, secures its peace and tranquillity, and bestows on its inhabitants a flourishing and happy condition. This species of superintendence is general in its operations, resembling, in this respect, the cognizance which the Deity takes of the different kinds of animals with regard to their preservation; and if, as a consequence of its general operation, the wicked does

prosper, no imputation can thence fairly be cast on the Divine government, any more than it can be reproached because it gave unto him hands or brains with which to carry his evil designs into execution, or sound limbs, robust health, and a perfect bodily conformation, which assist him in his nefarious practices. And as we cannot, in justice and equity, tax the Divine government with any wrong because it did not exclude the wicked from that general formation of limbs and features which have been bestowed on all mankind: We, likewise, cannot cast any imputation on Divine Providence for not excluding the wicked from the benefits of that general decree of prosperity which has been pronounced in favour of that body politic of which he is a member. Another source of his prosperity is to be deduced from the particular situation and circumstances in which, or the constellations and planetary influence under which, he is placed at his birth. The prosperity which, from any or all of these causes, falls to his share, he continues to enjoy, unless and until his crimes are, or become, so heinous that they inhibit the good which otherwise would have been his: But except his sins have reached this last degree of enormity—when the justice of the Deity no longer permits the offender to be screened or protected under the general dispensation of the Divine bounty—the wicked pursues his career of prosperity, not because the cognizance which Providence takes of his actions rewards his wickedness, or grants encouragement to crime—but because he merely shares in that welfare and success which the Deity has decreed should be the portion of all those who are born in a similar situation of life, or under a similar astral influence with himself; so that the superintendence of Providence is not extended to the individual, but to the class or division of which he is a member: And it is only, as we stated before, when his crimes have reached their full measure, and utmost limits, that they counteract and render void the general decree in favour of the class of which he is a member, and call down on him the

signal and condign punishment of heaven. 2. The second source of the prosperity which the wicked enjoys is derived from the superintendence of providence, taking cognizance of him as an individual, and of his actions; rewarding him here for what little virtue he may have practised, or good he may have done, and punishing him hereafter for the manifold crimes he has committed. For the Lord is righteous and just, and withholds from none of his creatures that reward to which, by their good deeds, they are entitled. And as no man is so thoroughly evil as not to have performed some one good deed, the Lord leaves not the wicked without that reward which his few meritorious actions may claim: But as his good deeds are few, and his crimes many, the Divine justice grants the recompense in his transitory state; while his punishment is reserved for a more lasting existence. This is indicated in Holy Writ, where it declares, “And repayeth them that hate him to their face to destroy them;” (Deut. vii. 10;) which Onkelos renders, “And repayeth those who hate him for the good they may have done in his sight in this world, but destroyeth them for their manifold sins in the world to come.” Our Rabbies, likewise, say, “We behold that the wicked prospers; but it is as a reward for the little good he may have done, as the Lord is just, and leaves no good action unrewarded.” (Talmud, treatise, *Be-rachoth*, folio 7.) And on another occasion they say, “He whose sins greatly outweigh his good deeds is permitted to prosper in this world.” (Talmud, treatise, *Kedushin*, folio 39.) This is expressly declared by the Sacred Singer when he exclaims, “The vain man knoweth not and the fool understandeth not this: That the wicked should bloom like grass, and all evil-doers should flourish.” (Psalm xlii. 7, 8.) He first states the objection which is urged with great clamour against the Divine government by those who are not capable of appreciating the justice of the Deity, and who, therefore, give vent to their surprise when they behold the prosperity of the wicked. Having first stated the objection, he instructs

us as to the purpose why this is so, and tells us it is "to destroy them everlastingly." They meet with the reward to which their few good deeds entitle them in this world; while, in that to come, the punishment due to their crimes awaits them. And in order to teach us the cause wherefore this share of temporal prosperity is bestowed on the wicked, the Sacred Singer, after mentioning the eternal rewards of the righteous, concludes by saying, "To proclaim that the Lord is just; my Rock, in whom there is no wrong." (Psalm xcii. 15.) The Lord, who is just, and in whom there is no wrong, deprives none of his creatures of the reward due to their good actions; and therefore he grants temporal happiness to those, who, while they have performed some few meritorious actions, are, by their numerous crimes and transgression, rendered unworthy of eternal felicity. And that the reward due to a solitary good action, or even to penitence, is not lost, Holy Writ proves to us, in the instance of Ahab, king of Israel, who was so pre-eminently wicked that the Sacred Scriptures characterize his conduct by saying, "There was no one like unto Ahab, who was so perverse to do evil in the sight of the Lord." (1 Kings xxi. 25.) Nevertheless, when he became truly penitent, clothed himself in sackcloth, and humbled himself before the Lord, the reward of his penitence was not withheld from him, but the doom which had been pronounced against his dynasty was deferred, and not executed until the days of his son: As we read: "And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Hast thou seen that Ahab humbles himself before me? Because he humbles himself before me, I will not bring this evil in his days, but in the days of his son will I bring this evil over his house," (1 Kings xxi. 28, 29.) The prosperity—which thus is granted to the wicked, as a reward for some good deed they have performed, or in consequence of their momentary but sincere penitence—has been adduced by our Rabbies as a proof of the future rewards which await the righteous: Accordingly, they say, "If those who transgress his holy will are thus rewarded, in how much

superior a degree will those be recompensed who obey his will?" For as the former are recompensed for their few good deeds in this world, so the latter are rewarded for their tried obedience and manifold virtues, by the eternal felicity of a future state." (Talmud, treatise *Nedarim*, folio 20.) 3. The third cause of the prosperity enjoyed by the wicked may be traced to the superintendence of Providence extended to others, be they pious or ungodly. Thus we find that Laban prospered on account of Jacob; that Potiphar, the Egyptian, saw his house blessed because of Joseph; that Lot was saved through the merits of Abraham; and not only was Lot so preserved, but the inhabitants of the city of Zoar, where he took refuge, escaped destruction on account of him who was saved through the merits of Abraham: As we read: "And the angel said, Behold in this thing likewise will I favour thee, not to destroy the city of which thou didst speak." (Genesis xix. 21.) The merits of ancestors likewise avail their descendants, and cause these to prosper, or avert the Divine wrath from them if they are wicked, as we read when Moses interceded for sinful Israel: "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thy servants." (Exodus xxxii. 12.) Sometimes again the wicked gathers great wealth in order that he may leave it to a pious son; or his years are prolonged, in order that he may give birth to a pious son, as our Rabbies say, "The wicked king Ahaz was permitted to live, in order that Hezekiah, his son, should come to the world." In all these instances which we have enumerated, the wicked have enjoyed the advantages derived from their affinity or connexion with the pious: But Holy Writ likewise offers us the example of the ungodly, who prospers and succeeds in his enterprises, because he has been appointed by the Deity to be an instrument of the Divine wrath to inflict punishment on other sinners. Thus we find the Lord permitted Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Titus, to be victorious, in order that through their instrumentality the sinful Israelites and other impious nations might be

punished. Thus the prophet, in the name of the Lord, declares to Sennacherib: "Woe, Assur, staff of my wrath! in their hands my anger is a truncheon. I will send them against a nation of hypocrites, and I will command them against the people of my wrath; to make booty and to gain plunder, and to trample on them like the sand of the street." (Isaiah x. 5, 6.) In like manner the prophet declares to Nebuchadnezzar: "Thou art my hammer, my instrument of war; through thee have I crushed nations, and through thee have I destroyed kingdoms." (Jeremiah li. 20.) 4. The fourth cause which we assign to the prosperity of the wicked is, that by their means the virtue of the truly pious may not only be brought to the test, but also be confirmed, approved, and made known to the world. For when the pious man perceives the constant and continued success which crowns the undertakings of the evil-doer, and the temporal felicity in which his days glide away; while but too often distress, oppression, and contumely, attend the virtuous; when the pious man sees this and still perseveres in his righteousness, his conduct affords the strongest possible proof of the purity of his motives, and the brightest example for the imitation of others. Whereas if instant punishment were to overtake the wicked, and his sins were followed by the immediate cessation of his previous prosperity, scoffers might have an opportunity of calling into question the purity of motive which dictates the conduct of the virtuous man; and while he is in reality a worshipper from love, they might attribute his piety to the base and selfish motives of fear and loss of temporal

welfare. But when men see the tempting example of the wicked who meets with no punishment, and whose prosperity is increased by his continued success, they must conclude that he who resists the influence of this temptation, and still perseveres in his piety, must be a worshipper from love, and, as such, worthy of being held up as a pattern for the imitation of others.

These four causes explain the prosperity which the wicked enjoys in this world, and which in every instance may be traced to one or other of them: That is to say, provided our estimate of a man's character be correct, and what we suppose to be happiness be really deserving of that name. But it is possible that we may be mistaken in our estimate; and that while we consider a man to be wicked, the Searcher of all hearts knows that he is virtuous. Accordingly, our Rabbies say, "If a man says to a woman, 'Behold thou art betrothed to me, on condition that I am righteous,' although he be notoriously impious, the betrothing is valid, as perhaps in his inmost heart he is become penitent." And that we may likewise be mistaken in our ideas of the happiness which attend wealth and power, is proved by the sage monarch, when he says, "There are riches which bring evil to their owners." (Eccles. v. 12.) Our Rabbies also, and most justly, observe: "He who multiplies riches increaseth care." (*Aboth*, chap. 2.) As David likewise says, "Many are the pains of the wicked." (Psalm xxxii. 10.) So that the experience of the most wise, most prosperous, and most successful, unite in assuring us, that neither riches nor honours invariably afford happiness in this world.

(*To be continued.*)

III. ON THE EXCELLENCY OF THE HEBREW LANGUAGE.

To the Editor of the Hebrew Review.

29th May, 5595.

SIR,—In turning over (some time since) a volume of tracts at the British Museum, marked, "Tracts relating to Literature, No. 1164," I found amongst the rest, one pamphlet "published at Cambridge, by W. Thurlstone, anno 1739," dedicated to the Reverend the Rector and Fellows of Lincoln College, in the University of Oxford; signed "PHILOGLOTTUS;"

from which I have made the following extract: As it tends to show the superior excellence of the Hebrew Language, perhaps you will have the goodness to afford it a page or two in your valuable publication, and for that purpose I send it to you.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

S. HART, SEN.

29, Gerard-street, Soho-square.

KNOWLEDGE in general, is an object which the mind of man so eagerly pursues, that, I am persuaded, the candid reader will favourably receive my endeavours to represent to him, the usefulness of that learning from whence all valuable knowledge has been originally derived, and to direct his views to those once famous parts of the world, to which some of the most eminent philosophers owed their greatest attainments. It is amongst the ancient Easterns, that we must expect to find at least that traditional knowledge, which descended to mankind more pure and extensive than among others.

If thus much be allowed, it will be easily granted, that the searcher after truth must find it purest at the fountain-head, and that it must shine clearest in the East. That I am far from being singular in this sentiment, is evident from the general resort of the wisest amongst the ancient sages thither, purely for the improvement of their minds.

THALES was the first of the Sophi, or Wise Men, famous in Greece; and is said to have learned his astronomy, geometry, astrology, and theology in his travels from his country, Miletus, to Egypt, Phœnicia, &c. PYTHAGORAS * was the father of philosophers, and of the virtuosos, and seems to have gone the farthest in search of learning and knowledge, and to have brought home the greatest treasures. He went first to Egypt, where he spent twenty-two years in study, conversation, &c., in order to gain admittance and instruction in the learning

and sciences, that were in the highest ascendant. Twelve years he spent in Babylon, and in the studies and learning of the Priests or Magi of the Chaldeans; besides the long abodes in those two regions, celebrated for ancient learning, and where our author, according to his calculation, says he gained the observations of innumerable ages; he travelled likewise upon the same account into Ethiopia, Arabia, India, &c. PLATO not only travelled over Egypt to this end, but even acknowledges, that the Greeks received their most valuable learning, at least in a great measure, from the Phœnicians and Syrians; that is, Hebrews, from whom, in particular from Moses, he has borrowed so largely, that Numenius the Pythagorean, did not scruple to style him Πλάτων Μωσῆς ἀττικίζων. ||

From those Easterns, the Greeks learned the use of letters by means of Cadmus; and, indeed, the etymology of this name, which is plainly derived from the Hebrew קדם, clearly discovers to us the obligations the Greeks are under to the Easterns for the first elements of knowledge; and, more especially perhaps, to the Hebrews and Chaldees, so remarkably characterized by the Oracle, Μοῦνο. Χαλδαῖοι σοφίην λείχον ἥδ' ἄρ' Ἑβραῖοι. §

The observatory on the tower of Babel was probably the first of its kind; and, we know, the Chaldeans were very eminent preceptors in Astronomy. The Egyptians, the parents of art and all philosophical science, were the first who attempted and measured the heavens; and, favoured by the serenity of their atmosphere, introduced many useful

|| "Plato, making Moses speak classically like a Grecian."

§ "The Chaldeans alone have obtained true wisdom, that is, the Hebrews."

* Pythagoras was contemporary with the seventy years of the captivity of the Hebrews at Babylon. It is not improbable that he had a personal knowledge of, and an interview with, the contemporary prophets; namely, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other sages of the priests and Levites, and generally of the Israelites.

improvements in astronomy. From the Easterns Solon copied some perhaps of his most excellent laws; and while the names of Mithridates and of Avicenna last, the Easterns must be acknowledged adepts in medicine. We are indebted to the Easterns almost for the preservation of every branch of philosophy, which, by translating the Greek writers particularly into the Arabic language, they rescued from the fatal ignorance that overspread the Western Hemisphere about the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

It is worth observing that the Arabic tongue, which is a branch of the Hebrew, is admirably adapted to the conveyance of philosophical knowledge; inasmuch, that some particulars which cannot be expressed without barbarity in the Latin idiom, are not only delivered with accuracy, but even flow with elegance, in the Arabic. Aristotle, we are assured, esteemed an acquaintance with the Hebrew learning so expedient to his disquisitions, that he made himself a master of that branch of literature, and was well versed therein.*

If we inquire into the excellencies which usually recommend the learned languages, we shall find the HEBREW to be an original and essential language, *that borrows of none, but lends to all*. Some of the sharpest Pagan writers, inveterate enemies to the religion and learning of both Jews and Christians, have allowed the Hebrew tongue to have a noble emphasis, and a close and beautiful brevity. The Hebrew is a language, for uniformity and simplicity, of all others the most easy; and yet at the same time so full of excellent wisdom and skill in the contrivance of it, as, considering it merely as a language, will afford exercise for the acutest parts, and give pleasure to the most curious. The Old Testament is the

rich treasury of all the sublimity of thought, moving tenderness of passion, and vigorous strength of expression, which are to be found in all the languages by which mortals declare their minds. One word is often a good description, and gives you a satisfactory account of the chief or distinguishing property or quality of the thing or person named. It would be no difficult matter for a man of diligence and good taste, competently skilled in the Hebrew and classical learning, to prove that the Hebrew Bible has every beauty and excellence that can be found in all the Greek and Roman authors, and a great many more and stronger than any in all the most admired classics. If it be objected, that this representation seems to affect the Holy Bible, rather than barely the Hebrew language; and that the world is stored with a variety of excellent translations; it may be answered, that this variety is an argument in favour of the study of the original; for, amidst a diversity of interpretations, how shall we be ascertained of the true one without the original? And, in short, after we have puzzled and perplexed ourselves with turning over and comparing the best translations, we can only know that the authors of such translations have acquainted us with the particulars we read in them, but cannot assure ourselves that the Holy Spirit has dictated such accounts in the Sacred Text. Add to this, that every language has its idioms, and peculiar beauties, which it is not possible to express or preserve in their native energy, when translated into any other language. This is more especially observable of the Hebrew, which is a language of a peculiar cast, both in the contexture of its words and the cadence of its periods, and contains certain expressions whose emphasis can no more be translated into another language than the water of a diamond can be painted without detracting from the original.

* "Universal History," p. 330. *Trebbechovii Verit. Creat. Mundi*, p. 255.

To the Editor of the Hebrew Review.

SIR,—THE enclosed chapter, translated from R. Azariah's *Meor Enaim*, treats the subject of Titus's gnat so ably, that, adapted as it is to some as a guide to the mode in which the allegories of our Rabbonim are to be under-

stood, I think it likely to be interesting to such of your readers as devote their attention to this point. All due allowance must be made to a person rendering this remarkably erudite writer into another language, on account of the particular conciseness of his style.

I am, Sir,
4, Bury Street, St. Mary Axe,
10th June, 1835.

Yours very obediently,
E. N.

IV. EXTRACT FROM THE MEOR ENAIM OF R. AZARIAH OF RUBEIS.

CHAPTER XVI.—ON THE GNAT WHICH ENTERED THE SKULL OF TITUS AS
RELATED BY OUR RABBONIM (IN THE GEMARA).

IN the *Perakim* of R. Eleazar, which are anterior to the generality of the works of the tenaim most known to us, this narration will be found in the forty-ninth chapter: "Titus, the wicked, entered the sanctuary, and said, 'No enemy or adversary can prevail against me.' What did God Almighty do? He sent a gnat which entered his skull, and went on till it reached his brain, and then became as large as a young pigeon, of the weight of two selahs, in order to show that his power was nothing." And in *Bereschith Rabba*, and *Achari muth Rabba*, you will find it explained fully; and also in *Gittin*, chapter *Hannizikin*. As there is a difference in many of the accounts, and in the *Gemara*, just mentioned, the upshot of the two accounts is this: That in his passage from the destruction of Jerusalem to Rome, Titus became profane, and blasphemed; while the ship was on the water a gnat entered his skull, and dwelled in it seven years: He commanded his head to be opened, to know in what the God of the Jews differs from them.

We read that, "R. Eliezer ben Jose says, 'I was among the nobility of Rome, and when he died, they opened his brain, they found it about the size of a bird weighing two selahs.'" In the *Mithnetha*, we read, "as a young pigeon, the weight of two *litterous*." Aboiah says, "The beak of its mouth was of brass, and its claws of iron, and they put it in a case." All that they say in one they say in all places, namely, that when they took out the gnat the life of Titus departed. And in *Tanchutha*, chapter *Chukath Tourah*, you will find it narrated differently, with more grace in the particulars, and more exactitude as regards the time. I

have not brought forward here all the places named according to their narrations; for whoever opens the books, and examines them, will easily see that the variations are great, and do not correspond. Now, independent of the variations just named, an attentive mind cannot but notice, that if the narration were accurate, the writers would coincide more nearly. Will not any man of understanding make several objections? First, that the circumstances are contrary to nature, and possible only to God; and that, therefore, it is strange that so great and manifest a miracle should not have great publicity and extensive effects; for it is clear, that, in going the way of the nose, it would ascend above the cerebrum, which is in truth stopped up. As anatomists have written, and particularly the sage Parnelius, in chapter fifty-nine of the book, "Ways of Nature," where he says that the proper mode of healing the upper part of the brain is not by medicines taken by the mouth, nor by injections through the nose, or the ears, or the neck, but by incisions in the bones of the skull; and it is also clear that it did not perforate it, as the answer of the commentators, chapter *Nezikin*, in their question upon the perforation tearing the marrow. Is it not strange that it should be imagined that there should be a vacuity between the skull and the brain sufficient for an animal of that size, which would bear upon the brain, and open it so much the more, as it says, particularly in *Bereschith Rabba*, mentioned above, that "it dwelt in his brain," even a long time; whereas it says, particularly in *Chulin*, chapter iii., that all animals without bones cannot live longer than twelve months. And what is meant

by the beak of the mouth being of brass, and the claws of iron, which metals, as is well known to naturalists, are produced in the bowels of the earth by the operation of the heat of the sun on the primary qualities. Iron, in particular, is formed by a sulphuric admixture with small particles of live silver, without liquefaction; and brass from live silver melted and liquefied with sulphur, red and perturbed, as you will find easily explained in the second section of the second chapter of the book called the "Gate of Heaven," by Ebn Latif.

And now, in a sickness like this, in which the brain is of course much disturbed, would it be possible to think that Titus said and did the sensible things which are told of him? Again, as regards the time, obstacles present themselves; for go and read in all the Chronicles of the Emperors, and particularly in the traditions of R. Abraham ben Dior, and you will find that the destruction of the temple took place in the second year of Vespasian, and that he reigned about ten years, and Titus his son reigned after him less than three years; so that at the end of the seven years, when the Rabbonim say he died, he actually mounted the throne; and in some of my leisure moments I looked through all the most noted historical works,—for I, on this subject, think of the words of Jeremiah, "Thus saith the Lord, Ask I pray you of the nations,"—in order to know what they wrote of the death of Titus and the particulars of his disease; and I found eight respectable writers coinciding that the disease was the ague: They are, the *Cesarean* (Eusebius), in his tables, p. 74; *Cassiodorus*, p. 175; *Contractus*, p. 193, (all three are printed together); *Suetonius*; *Eutropius*; *Plotinus*; *the Lives of the Cæsars*, by Missia and Petrarca, each in his place as in the tables. Two other writers have added their testimony and particulars; for Dionysius, the writer, in narrating what Titus said at his death, that "he regretted he did not do a thing when he was able to do it;" he (Dionysius) remarks that, according to his opinion, that sin was that he did not slay Domitian, his brother,

because he thought that he brought about his death by poison, in order to reign instead of him, as actually was the case: And Philostratus, the Greek, in his seventh book of the *Life of Apollonius*, relates that this Domitian slew him with what he pricked his flesh, viz, the spine which is in the tail of the fish called *pastinaca*, which is a remedy for the cold of the ague: With this also was the warrior Ulysses, king of the Isle of Ithaca, slain by his son Telegonus. Now here are ten from the language of the nations, who have simply controverted the narration of our Rabbonim; and those who respect the truth will admit that with these particulars they are better acquainted than our Rabbonim. On the other hand, I have seen in a writer of our own times, called Perintilla, in his book on the kings of Greece, a mention of a death by means of a gnat entering the brain of Antiochus Epiphanes, the enemy of the Jews, in the days of the Maccabees: (On account of God's delivering us from his hands, we keep the feast of *Chanukah*, as is known:) It is true that he does not relate the circumstance in the wonderful way our Rabbonim do; and in the second book of the Maccabees, c. ix., it is narrated how Antiochus assumed and presumed, and acted proudly; and how, while the words were in his mouth, heavy diseases seized on and dried him up, worms entered his flesh, and he died in agonies, according to all that is written there at full length. There is no mention made of the gnat which Perintilla writes of: Where he got it from I know not. In fine, from all that is here related, it seems very clear that this story of Titus, mentioned by our Rabbonim, is not so, either in part or on the whole. Now it is not my wish here to be overwise, or to proclaim to the world that there are things in the works of our Rabbonim without foundation, in a plain sense; but such as the story of Tuohab bar Taltah the Persian, in *Haronah*, or that of Rabba bar Barchonah, in *Humouchir*, are considered as fables and comparisons by all the world excepting fools, as shown by Maimonides in the preface to the *More Nebuchim*: But as I have heard

many respectable men well versed in Tourah take the words in their literal sense, and express themselves vehemently against those who do not believe them, I will here extend my remarks to those who drink with thirst the words of our Rabbonim, in order to direct the human understanding to a proper course, unless, when it hears things like this of Titus, or any histories of the like kind, one may be perplexed, not being able to force the mind to believe them; as in regard to these things which I have mentioned, in the innocence of my heart and the simplicity of my hands, and with all submission to superior knowledge, I think that in the same way as the profane writers abound in their poems, orations, and other works, with narrations of circumstances which have never taken place, and with facts analogous to their times, brought forward to inspire a love of fame and knowledge, as many among them have done, particularly their principal orator (Cicero, in the *First Philippic*, and in his *Defence of Roscius*), so and in the same manner our Rabbonim (who were truly wise)—even whilst they clearly knew that a thing of this kind had no foundation, or at least not in the manner related by them,—still did not hesitate to bring it forward, and to narrate the exact particulars, as if they had taken place, in order to implant in the minds of the vulgar that good, and that right, which was always the aim of their instructions and tales which have reached us. Is it not thus, that in speaking to the honour of God, they say in chapter *Chelek*, on the verse, “After these things, Jeroboam did not turn from his way,” what means “after?” R. Abba says, “After God had pulled Jeroboam by the garment, and said to him, ‘Repent; and I, and you, and the son of Jesse, will walk together in the garden of Eden,’ he replied, ‘Who will walk at the head?’ He said, ‘The son of Jesse will be at the head.’ ‘In that case,’ said Jeroboam, ‘I have nothing to do with it.’” In this, the intention of the Rabbonim is, to show how the Almighty condescends to turn sinners from their way, and how among

those sinners, there are many of stiff-necks, who, for vain and slight causes, reject unequalled advantages. The same remark applies to their saying of Sennacherib, (on account of the words used by Isaiah, “The Lord will raze,” &c.,) “God Almighty came in the shape of an old man,” &c.: All which is intended to show the great mercy of God, in saving and assisting us. Now these tales, and others, would suffice to remove a temporary impediment; yet, nevertheless, to effect the desired good, they have therefore been preserved in books; and, according to the remark of the author of the *Cuzari*, the end of the third disputation, where he says, “that the mode is a praiseworthy and respectable one, adopted from the practice of the prophets; as in 1 Kings it says, “I have seen the Lord sitting on the throne, &c.; and He said, Who shall entice him? &c., and a spirit came forth,” &c.; the whole of which is metaphorical to convey a certain point intended by it. The same remark applies to the occurrence of Titus above mentioned, in which you may safely say, that the whole is a piece of instruction and moral frequently conveyed in this manner by our sages, in order to impress on the minds of the multitude, that great is our Lord, and abundant of power to chastise those who rise against Him, and to retribute and punish the proud, even by means of the smallest of His creatures, and, with great wisdom, they have personified the proud, by the name of Titus, who appeared so to us. From all this, must we not now conclude, that they are justified in writing in this manner, which is a means of encouraging a proper feeling within us towards our Father who is in heaven? And if you are inclined to search whether this is the mode of writers of all times and nations to allegorize for certain purposes, go and read what we are told in *Bereshith Rabba*, chapter 78, on the hinderance to the rebuilding of our temple in the days of R. Joshua ben Chanina, and Julianus and Pappus, on account of the representations of the Samaritans to the Cæsar of those days; and, on that occasion R. Joshua, as a sage, and a man of

temperate language, pacified the assembled people, who were bent upon rebellion, by bringing forward the story of the lion and the cuckoo, which is found in *Æsop*, under the name of the wolf, the sixth fable of his well-known book.

And you will find the Christian writers, Nicephorus Callistos, book x. c. 32, of his *Chronicles*; and Socrates, the Christian, book iii. c. 20, according to what the good Physician mentions in his second book on earthquakes, and Plotinus; and the writer of the *Lives of the Cæsars*; all of them, in speaking of the forty-sixth Emperor, Julian, who was contemporary with Damasus, the thirty-ninth Pope, about two hundred and ninety years after the destruction, mention the hinderance of the building; but their aim is to speak ill of us; for they say, that after the building was finished, there happened a great earthquake, which threw the whole to the ground, to establish the curse pronounced by their Saviour, that, "in that place, one stone should not remain on another." It is clear that the thing did not take place as they relate it, for in none of the old writers, do I find any relation of that earthquake. Let them not, however, be blamed for it, for they did it with the intention of bringing men over to their own way of believing. By the bye, we may remark that there is a distinction to be made between *this* R. Joshua ben Chanina (who is also mentioned in *Nidda*, chapter *Tenoukouth*, in respect to the twelve questions of the men of Alexandria) and the R. Joshua ben Chanina (who was the disciple of R. Simon ben Jochai) who, in *Abouth*, chapter ii., in *Beith Hashouava*, chapter *Hachauvile*, and in *Truthphathah Desoucah*, is mentioned as having lived in the time of the second temple: It is he who delivered R. Ismael ben Elisha from the prison, as mentioned in *Tenoukouth*. There is also a distinction between Trajan, who (in *Seder Tahanith*) slew Julianus and Pappus (above mentioned in *Ludkeith*, and who was only a governor from Rome,) and the Trajan, the fourteenth emperor, who slew such multitudes of Jews in Alexandria, of Egypt; and who,

according to the opinion of all the writers of the *Lives of the Casars*, died in the city of Seleucia of a bowel complaint, on his return from his expedition against the Parthians. But now let us return to the matter of Titus, and let us say whether all the strange and impossible things, our Rabbonim have mentioned about the gnat is a piece of allegorical wisdom of theirs, for by it they effect two things: They attract the wonder and admiration of the multitude, and induce the understanding to draw suitable inferences from the tale. This is what Maimonides himself remarks in *More Nebuchim*, preface on the passage, "Apples of gold," &c., which is only a poetical allegory. This too is part of the talent of the Divine Poet, when he says, "Thy mouth is as the tower of Lebanon, thy stomach as the beauty of wheat," &c., (Song of Solomon,) which are praises out of the usual kind, to show the understanding that the intention of the speaker is to be deduced from such expressions as we shall explain further, please God, in the twenty-second chapter before us. The commentators, who have endeavoured to reconcile this tale to nature, have rejected the literal acceptation of it: Some take it as it is written in the mode of the writer of the *Meor*, on the passage—"This is Cyrus, that is Darius, that is Artaxerxes," as you will see at the end of the eighteenth chapter before us.

Now, my reader, thou to whom I hope my explanations will have been acceptable, take heed to apply them only in the proper places, as well as any other explanations of the same kind which thou mayest hear from me; lest both thou and I should be injured instead of my serving thee as I wish to do; for not all the words of our Rabbonim are to be explained in the same manner. And notice that for the most part Maimonides, our righteous teacher, inclines to this way, as expressed in the preface to the book which he intended to write on these matters, viz.: "The book to explain all the doubtful tales which appear removed from truth, and contrary to the understanding, and which are, in fact,

fables and comparisons." So far are his words here, and further on he says, "Know that the key to the comprehension of all that the prophets have said, and the consciousness of its truth, is the due understanding of the fables and their objects." So far are his words; and does he not set out with these two principles in the book he wrote for us; first, that the comparisons of the Rabbonim and their fables were very numerous; and, secondly, that if they were not prophets they were the sons of prophets, nor was there wrong in any of the ways in which they walked?

Now I will not refrain from acquainting thee, my dear reader, that when the words which I have written concerning the gnat of Titus became known to some understanding men of our people, they spoke loudly against me, and said that I brought a blot upon the holy words of our sages, and that the hand of the Lord would not refrain from bringing a due punishment to his enemies, like

me; but I nevertheless have not hesitated to write my words for a memorial in a book; for, besides the reasons I have given in the beginning of this chapter, I may say, like Maimonides in his forenamed preface to the *More Nebuchim*, and the end of the fifth chapter, first section, *Chelek*: One of these two reasons must prevail, if the reader wishes to take all that our Rabbonim have written in its literal meaning, as appearing to bring every thing near to the glory of heaven, then let him treat this my chapter as if it never had been written either for good or for bad; let it not please nor vex him; but if, on the contrary, he seeks to explain those sayings, and cannot reconcile them to his understanding, then I think he will be acting wisely to make inquiry, in the manner above mentioned. Now, blessed be He who apportioned to the Rabbonim (sacred be their memory!) from his wisdom; and blessed be He by their lips who praise him in the grave!

V. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 160.)

PURITY of descent and hereditary nobility were as highly estimated by the Jews of Spain as by their Arab rulers; and he who was so fortunate as to become allied to one of the leading families was sure to enjoy honour and influence. It is not easy to discover on what the claims to nobility of these Jewish families were founded; but it is certain that in order to trace their lineage to a long line of ancestry they carried their genealogical tables back to the east, and to the happy times when their people flourished independent under the royal sceptre of David, from whose sons many of them professed to descend, while others sought their ancestry in the most distinguished scriptural families of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. R. Henoch, supported by the connexions he had formed through his matrimonial alliance, and patronized by R. Hasdai, found it not difficult to be appointed

successor to his father, R. Moses, who died about the year 998, after having presided about eighteen years over the school he had founded. R. Henoch was so beloved and respected by the principal Jewish families, that when he visited the royal pleasure grounds of Alsahra, near Cordova, for his recreation, the numerous and splendid train which accompanied him almost vied with the magnificence of the caliph.

But soon after his appointment, his great friend and patron R. Hasdai died; (about the year 999;) and immediately after his death a spirit of dissension broke out among the Jews, which till then respect for R. Hasdai and the dread of his influence had kept suppressed. A rival to the claims of R. Henoch started up in the person of R. Joseph ben Stanas ben Abethur, a man of great learning and talents, who had been appointed by the caliph Hascham

to translate the Talmud, under the superintendence of R. Moses. He had calculated on being the successor of his former teacher, and felt aggrieved at his merits not being properly appreciated. He soon formed a party, and a war of words began, which caused dissensions to break out among the Jews in all their communities throughout the south of Spain. It is probable that R. Joseph tried to promote the cultivation of Arabic literature at the expense of the Talmud, while R. Henoch and his friends defended the old system. R. Joseph was unable to maintain himself, and was eventually excommunicated through his continued opposition to the authority of R. Henoch. Forsaken by most of his followers, he sought the protection of the caliph: But Hascham, who did not feel interested in the dissensions of the Jews, said to him, "If the Moslemites had expressed themselves as decidedly against me, as the Jews have done against thee, I would quit the country; do thou therefore act as I would do, were I circumstanced as thou art, and quit Spain." Such is the reply, which according to the historian, (R. Abraham ben Dior,) the caliph gave to R. Joseph ben Stanas: Nor does this answer appear improbable, as it is strongly marked with the spirit in which these Arabian rulers acted towards their Jewish subjects.

This peremptory declaration of the caliph left R. Joseph neither hope nor alternative; he therefore immediately departed from Cordova. He first sought refuge at Bagana, or Begiana, in the territories of Murcia, where he expected to gain R. Solomon ben Josias Hakohen, of Fez, in his favour; but that learned man, terrified by the excommunication which had been pronounced against R. Joseph, refused to see him. R. Joseph wrote him a long letter in Arabic, in which he expressed opinions offensive to the Rabbinical system of the Talmud. R. Samuel replied mildly, reproving these opinions, but decidedly refusing to grant him an interview. Disappointed in the shelter he had expected to find, R. Joseph embarked for the east, with the intention of visiting Pum-

beditha, as he thought he had every reason to calculate on a friendly reception from the head of that school, R. Hai Gaon, who could not fail to be highly displeased with R. Moses, and his son R. Henoch, and therefore inclined to favour the pretensions of a man who proclaimed himself the rival and enemy of the Gaon's Spanish competitor. But R. Joseph was mistaken in his calculation: Though R. Hai had lost both wealth and influence through the newly-erected Spanish schools, though his dislike of the occidental teachers was deeply rooted, yet his dislike of innovation was even still stronger, the zeal with which he, the chief of the great and original Talmudic school, felt himself bound to uphold the supremacy of the Talmud absorbed every other consideration. R. Joseph's opinions on that subject was too well known to permit R. Hai Gaon's affording him his countenance or support: He therefore declined receiving R. Joseph, who, disappointed of all his expectations, utterly dispirited and mortified in the highest degree, withdrew to Damascus, where he died. That he was a man of great and varied talents, of knowledge so extensive as almost to be universal, is evident even from those who combated his pretensions and opinions with the greatest violence and perseverance: And though not directly, and during his own lifetime, yet indirectly, and in the succeeding generation, the influence of his opinions not only began to be sensibly felt, but even succeeded in giving a different direction to part, at least, of the eagerness and zeal with which the Jews had hitherto applied themselves to the exclusive study of the Talmud.

During the time that he was in vain seeking an asylum, his partisans continued active, not only to obtain his recal, but also to gain the upperhand of their adversaries. The most active of his adherents were two brothers, Jacob and Joseph ben Gav, who carried on an extensive silk-manufactory at Cordova. They availed themselves of an accidental occurrence to gain the royal favour. Some deputies from Terracon (Terragona) presented themselves before

the governor of the province, in order to complain of the oppressive conduct of the deputy-governor, to state their grievances, and to pray for redress; and in order to obtain a favourable hearing they brought with them, as a present, one thousand gold pieces in a silken purse or bag. But they had scarce commenced their address, and before they had time to introduce their present, when the governor, enraged at their boldness in coming before him to accuse his favourite, caused them to be seized by his guards, whipt, and thrust into a dungeon. His commands were obeyed with such haste, that while they were being dragged away, the treasurer of the party dropped the purse with the one thousand gold pieces, which fell, unheeded, in the outer court; and the two brothers, Jacob and Joseph ben Gav, entering at the instant the hapless deputies were conveyed to prison, found the bag, which they secreted and carried home with them. As they were zealous partisans of R. Joseph ben Stanas, they resolved to conceal their having found the purse, and to employ the money in an attempt to ingratiate themselves with the caliph, Hascham, and with his vizier, the famous Al Manzor Mohammed ben Abi Amer, a man of profound penetration, great talents, and a zealous friend and protector of the Jews, and of their learning. The two brothers accordingly set about manufacturing costly garments and splendid standards, which they offered as presents to the monarch and to his vizier. The latter was so pleased with this mark of their attention, that he granted unto Jacob ben Gav a patent, nominating him as chief of the Jews in Spain, with authority to appoint subordinate officers, and to collect the taxes and contributions payable by the Jews. The community of Cordova was obliged to do homage to this new successor of the great

R. Hasdai, and his installation was celebrated with great solemnity. This took place in the year 999.

The first use the new chief made of his authority, was to command R. Henoch to resign his office, under a threat that if he presumed to pronounce any decision in his judicial capacity, Jacob would cause him to be turned adrift on the sea in a boat, without rudder, sails, or provision. At the same time he dispatched a messenger to R. Joseph ben Stanas, inviting him to return and take possession of the vacant dignity. But the latter was too conscientious and honourable to accept the offer: He therefore not only declined entering on an office, the disposal of which Jacob ben Gav had obtained by intriguing and unworthy means; but upbraiding the chief, in bitter terms, for his dishonest and culpable conduct, he concluded his letter by declaring that he considered R. Henoch as the most worthy man in Spain, and infinitely superior in every respect to him who presumed to dictate his fate. Some time elapsed ere this answer was received; and in the interim Jacob ben Gav had experienced one of those sudden vicissitudes which are so common under a despotic government, and which consigned him from the summit of power to a dreary dungeon. Almanzor had raised Jacob to the high dignity of chief of the Jews, because he expected through the instrumentality of his new delegate to derive a greater revenue than heretofore from the Jews. But Jacob ben Gav was, both from natural disposition and policy, averse to oppressing the Jews; and so far from acting rigorously in the collection of the revenue, he not only proceeded with great lenity, but also made liberal gifts to the poor out of his own private means. Almanzor, finding himself disappointed in his expectation, caused Jacob to be imprisoned (about the year 1000).

(To be continued.)

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VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 164.)

He * used to say, "Man is beloved, for he was created in the image of God; but that love was greater still which made it known to him that he was created in the image of God; as it is said, 'In the image of God He made man.'" (III. 18.)

COMMENTARY. *In the image of God*—Many are the expositions and interpretations that have been given of the word צֶלֶם, "image" of God, as can be seen in the first chapter of the book *Moreh Nebochim*, by the great Maimonides. The celebrated Rabbi Don Isaac Abarbanel, in his commentaries on this treatise, entered into a profound investigation and learned explanation of the probable meaning of the word. To these two great authors we refer such of our readers as are desirous of being acquainted with the various opinions which have been advanced, and the explanations which have been offered, on this difficult passage of Scripture; but as our purpose is to offer our own views only, we shall proceed to state the great preference which man has above all other animals; for, as we have already stated, the present maxim of our teacher is, the illustration of the command of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself:" And in order that man may properly understand the true cause and import of that command, it is needful he should duly appreciate the dignity of his own soul; and also know that his compeers in that dignity—the whole human race—are entitled to his love, because they, like him, are created in the image of God. But as the question which next arises is, "What advantages does man enjoy above

other animate beings, in consequence of the dignity conferred on him, exclusively of being created in the image of God?" we reply, that these advantages, as we shall presently illustrate, are such as to give man the highest rank and power amongst all animate beings of this nether world, not one of whom is able or worthy to compete with man, or to rival him in the love of the human species.

Know that the soul of man is celestial, or from above, and is not only in that respect, but also in the variety and extent of its powers, distinguished above the animal creation. It is true that we find qualities approximating to some of these powers in the dispositions of some animals; as, for instance, man is gifted with valour, so is the lion, or the horse; for we read in the Sacred Scripture, "The lion is the most valiant of animals; he retreats for no one;" (Prov. xxx. 30;) and, in another place, "He delights not in the valour of the horse." (Psalm cxlvii. 10.) There is fidelity in man, so there is in the dog; and many other instances of the kind. But this resemblance between the powers of man and those of the animal is not real, because they spring from different sources: In animals they are an effect of the terrestrial soul, or instinct; whereas in man they are the faculties of the celestial soul—an

* R. Akeebah.

emanation from the Creator. Accordingly, the difference between these powers is far greater than their resemblance: For while the valour of the lion is only displayed in the attack of other animals when, prompted by hunger or rage, he adopts that method which his instinct suggests to satisfy the one or appease the other; in man, the manner of displaying his valour is as various as the occasion which calls it into action; and may be either mental or bodily, active or passive, inflicting or enduring. This difference of qualities, which, though similar in some one of their effects, are totally dissimilar in their origin and nature, is beautifully illustrated by Maimonides, in the first of his eight chapters of ethics, where he says, "Man thrives through the faculty of nutrition in the human soul, whilst the ass thrives by that in the asinine soul, and the eagle by that which is peculiar to its soul. And although we apply the same expression, 'nutrition,' indiscriminately to all beings, nevertheless, its operation is not by any means the same. In the same indiscriminate manner we use the term 'sensation,' applying it alike to all animals: Not that the sensations of man are the same as those of other animate beings; or the feeling of one species exactly like that of any other. But as each distinct species of animate beings has its own peculiar soul, the faculties of each species of soul must be peculiar to itself. And though a similarity observable in the operations of these peculiar and distinct faculties might induce us to class them together, as resulting from the same species of soul; yet our doing so would be an error, as such is not the case.

"In order to illustrate what we have here stated, we offer the following example: 'Three dark places become illumined; the one by the light of the sun, the second by that of the moon, and the third by that of a taper.' In each of these places the operation of the light produces the same effect, namely, the dispelling of darkness: Nevertheless, the operating cause is in each place different and distinct; being in the one the sun, in the second the

moon, and in the third a taper. Such, likewise, is the case with the cause of sensation; which, in man, is the human soul; in the ass, the asinine soul; and in every individual species of animal its own peculiar soul. Nor is there any thing in common to them except the name, which, as we said before, is indiscriminately applied."

Thus far the great Maimonides: And the simile which he uses proves fully to the satisfaction of every reflecting mind, that effects, possessing a considerable degree of resemblance in their operations, may be produced by causes altogether dissimilar: As in the simile which he employs, the effect produced is the same in each of the three dark places, inasmuch as the darkness is dispelled and light introduced; nevertheless, there is not only a complete diversity of causes, but there is also a mighty difference in the nature of the effect which each of the three causes produces: For the light of the sun is not in its nature and effects like that of the moon; and neither of these two are like the artificial light of a taper. Such is likewise the difference in the powers of the human and celestial, and the animal or terrestrial, soul. So that though a similarity may be observable in their effects and operations, yet they are altogether dissimilar, not only in their origin, but in their essence.

The more noble and most predominating faculties of the human soul do not, however, find any representatives among the powers of the terrestrial soul or instinct by which animals are governed. Thus the faculties of reason, of wisdom, of understanding, and the like, which are the guides of the human soul, are not to be found among animals; because, these powers being of a superior or spiritual nature, form part of that צלם, or "image" of God, in which man alone, of all that lives on earth, has been created.

While these faculties which are peculiar to man, and exclusively his own, at once stamp his superiority over all animals, even in those other powers, a resemblance to which may be found by other creatures, he enjoys a superiority of a three-fold

nature: 1. The different faculties and qualities which are dispersed among the various species of animals, are all to be found united in man. Thus, the valour of the lion, the fidelity of the dog, the sagacity of the elephant, the decent cleanliness of the cat, the industry of the ant, the conjugal faithfulness of the dove, and all other qualities by which any species of animal is distinguished, are to be found united in man; while, by all other animals, we find no such mixture or combination of qualities; but that which we find any race gifted with, is peculiar to itself: We do not find that the turtle dove is possessed of valour, or the lion of active industry; but the human soul comprises them all; no power or faculty is withheld from it; but its unlimited capacities combine within it the powers of all creatures. Moreover, the faculties with which all other animals are gifted are limited to one particular exercise or operation; thus, the valour of the lion extends no further than to assail its prey; the decent cleanliness of the cat, to its seeking privacy; but beyond this one peculiar exercise of their powers, we know no other use that these animals can make, or do make, of their faculties; whereas, the human mind scarce finds a limit, so varied and extensive is the field of its activity. 2. The second ground of superiority which exalts man above all animal creatures, is, the conflicting qualities which he centres in his own mind, and which he can call into activity, according to the dictates of his reason, or the exigencies of the circumstances in which he is placed. The lion, it is true, is valiant; but he is so at all times, and his valour is no merit to him, inasmuch as it is the offspring of an instinct which does not permit him to know fear. The tiger is fierce; but he is so at all times, because, from instinct, he is altogether destitute of tenderness. Such is the case with all animals whose instinct subjects them to the one faculty only with which they are gifted, and altogether excludes the opposite powers or sensations. But such is not the case with man. He may be at once both valiant and timid, fierce and ten-

der, sluggish and industrious. From his being gifted with the faculty of calling into activity one of two opposite qualities, being alike possessed of both, arises volition, or the freedom of will, which is exclusively the property of man; for as he has the power of doing a thing, or leaving it undone, of giving preponderance in his mind to valour or timidity; he chooses according to his own free and uncontrolled will to act as he thinks proper, which is another great and decided superiority which man has over animals; who, being tied up within the bounds of the one faculty peculiar to their terrestrial soul or instinct, cannot possess, and indeed do not require, volition. 3. The third great distinction is, that the faculties of animals are circumscribed by the laws of nature; whereas, the faculties of man are boundless, and unlimited by any barrier under the sun. The desires of animals are bounded by the wants incidental to their nature: When the ox has his fill of grass, he desires not to partake of the dainties which are placed on his master's table; whereas, in man, his hopes and his fears, his wishes and his apprehensions, are alternate and unbounded; as our Rabbies say, "No man ever died yet who had enjoyed one half of what he desired," either in wealth, honour, pleasures, or mental attainments; therefore, the world and its fulness are insufficient to satisfy the ardent aspirations of man. For as his soul is of a celestial and spiritual essence, an emanation from the Most High, it feels that the source whence it derives is boundless in perfection; and that, therefore, the more perfect the human soul can render itself, the more nearly will it become what it is intended to be—the image of God. But as we have already stated, that qualities of the most contradictory kind are combined in the human soul, that very boundless thirst for perfection, which impels him to strive unceasingly to attain the utmost excellence of which his nature is capable, likewise impels him to harbour an inordinate desire for riches, honours, pleasures, or whatever else his imagination induces him to look upon as good;

and as he thus may either employ the powers confided to him for good or for evil, and is uncontrolled in the use he makes of the faculties of his soul, he is responsible; which leads us to the great and peculiar distinction by which man is exalted above all other terrestrial creatures, and which truly constitutes the *צֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים*, or "image of God," in which man is created.

The Supreme Being, who called the universe forth out of nothing, is eternal, that is to say, his duration has neither beginning nor end. The human soul, as Holy Writ expressly informs us, is an emanation from the eternal and everlasting Being; and, though it does for a time take up its abode in that frail tenement, the mortal body of man, it does not thereby forfeit the qualities which are essential to, and inherent in, it, as a consequence of the Divine Source whence it emanated. Some of these qualities we have already enumerated, such as wisdom, knowledge, understanding, &c.; but the

first and most glorious is immortality, or the continued duration of the celestial or spiritual essence, after the material substance in which it is enveloped has lost the principle of animal vitality, and decays. This quality, in which the soul is in some degree a participant in the attributes of Deity, is exclusive and peculiar to man, among all the beings of this nether creation; for of man alone, Holy Writ declares, that the Creator breathed into him *נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים* "a living soul," meaning thereby a soul gifted with inherent life or immortality. And as man is endowed with faculties, various and unlimited, over which he has the free and uncontrolled power, and for the proper use of which he is responsible, the Judge, before whose eternal throne that responsibility is to be made good, does not exact it from the perishable clay, but from the celestial and spiritual soul, in bestowing which on man, He conferred on him the glorious dignity of being created in the image of God.

(To be continued.)

II METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 167.)

CHAPTER XIII.

IN reply to the second objection urged against the Divine government, in the seventh chapter of this division, namely, that the righteous is exposed to adversity; we say, That it often happens that a man's afflictions are caused by his own misconduct; nevertheless he arraigns the Divine justice, resembling the sick man; who, though his pains are the result of his irregular and vicious habits, does, nevertheless, exclaim against nature, and accuse the dispensations of Providence. It is of these men that the wise Solomon saith, "The folly of a man perverts his path, and his heart rages against the Lord." (Proverbs xix. 3.) His meaning is, that when a man, obeying the dictates of his own free and uncontrolled will, does that

which is wrong, and which in its results is productive to him of suffering and affliction, it must be wanton folly alone which can incite him to rage against the Lord, and against the just decrees of Providence; as, were he to give ear to the dictates of reason, he would feel within his own breast that he himself is the true cause of his sufferings. An instance of this improper querulousness against the Divine justice we find in the brethren of Joseph; for though at first they had felt some compunctious visitings, and accordingly owned, "Verily we have been guilty against our brother, when we saw the grief of his soul, when he implored us, but we heard him not; therefore does this affliction befall us;" (Gen. xlii. 21;) yet a very short time afterwards they exclaim, "Wherefore has God done this to us?" (Genesis xlii. 28.) The complaints

and accusations of such unreasonable men do not deserve either our attention or our reply; they carry that within their own bosom which, if they would listen to its voice, would at once point out to them the true source and cause of their adversity; for conscience flatters not, nor does it upbraid a man unless he merits reproaches. There is another class who have been sinners. The Divine forbearance and long-suffering has however given them time for penitence, and they go on unmolested until they forget their sins; and when at length the punishment consequent on their crime overtakes them, and the Deity afflicts them, that they may repent of the sins they have committed, they, having forgotten the crime which during many years has remained unexpiated, rail against the dispensations of Providence: And while they loudly exclaim that they suffer without cause, they lose sight of the well-known declaration, "There is no oblivion before the throne of thy glory!" Though the memory of their sin is obliterated from their minds, it is present still before the judgment-seat of the Lord. These men cause great evil by inducing others to call the Divine justice in question: They resemble a man who has borrowed from another a thousand gold pieces; the creditor is generous and forbearing, does not demand any interest, nor require payment for many years, until the debtor forgets that ever he was indebted at all: So that, when after long forbearance, the creditor insists upon being paid, the debtor denies owing him any thing, and complains of being unjustly sued; while men who are unacquainted with the whole transaction take the debtor's part, and say to the creditor: "If he had been in your debt, as you pretend, you would not have waited so many years before you claimed your due, but would have done at once what you are doing now, namely, exacted repayment." When, however, the proofs adduced by the creditor have wrought conviction on every mind, and the debtor eventually recollects that he is wrong in his denial of the debt, those who at

first took his part still continue to blame the creditor, and cry out, "After he has shown him so many years' forbearance, why does he now all at once become so rigorous? He ought to trust longer, because he has trusted so long." Thus in either case they will blame the creditor, while no censure is addressed to the unprincipled debtor, who, during so many years, did not either acknowledge his debt, or attempt to pay it: This simile illustrates so fully the manner in which men presume to murmur against the dispensations of Providence, that we need add nothing more, except quoting the prophet, who says, in the name of the Lord, "Behold, it is written down before me: I will not remain silent, but will repay, even on their own breasts will I repay them." (Isaiah lxxv. 6.) The meaning is: "Sons of man, do not imagine that because ye no longer remember your sins, as the Divine forbearance has been so long extended to you, that therefore the Deity has likewise forgotten them. Such is not the case; your sins are written down before him, and though the Divine mercy and forbearance leave you sufficient time for penitence, and the claims of his justice are not urged, yet the time comes when these claims are no longer silent, and when ye are rewarded according to your doings." This second class does not merit our attention; nor does the cause of their afflictions require investigation any more than the class who preceded them, and with whom we opened this chapter; for neither the one nor the other class can be called righteous, as he who is fool enough not to see that his misfortunes are owing to his own misconduct, or he who is so weak-minded as to forget his sins, cannot lay claim to the appellation of righteous; and the adversity which befalls them cannot be adduced in support of the objection against the justice of the Divine government; for while man is guided by outward appearances, the Lord sees the heart: Nor can we maintain that the afflictions such persons labour under are actual evils, as perhaps they are exposed to transient sufferings in order to preserve them from a more

dire and lasting infliction. Having thus alluded to two classes which are but too numerous; namely, those who have the folly to impute their sufferings to any other than the true cause, namely, their own misconduct; and those who, forgetful of their own demerits, do not remember that they are sinners; we next proceed to another class; namely, those who really are righteous, and who suffer under true adversity: Of them we say, That as the prosperity of the wicked may be traced to one or other of four sources, the adversity of the righteous may likewise be so traced. 1. That evil which results from the general decree of Providence against a certain nation or country; or against a certain class of society; or which results from the aspect and influence of the planets under which he is born. From one or other of these causes the righteous may suffer under a general decree of Providence; for when any nation is doomed to war, famine, or pestilence, the decree of Providence affects the individuals of whom that nation is composed, not on their own particular account, but because they form parts of a whole, or are the members of a nation which Providence in its wisdom deems it proper and necessary to afflict, although the individuals on whom the infliction falls may not have deserved their punishment. Thus we find that Daniel and his three friends were carried into captivity with Jehojachin, and Jeremiah with Zedekiah, not because either Daniel or Jeremiah merited so severe a punishment, but because the decree which doomed Jerusalem and its inhabitants to captivity was general. Sometimes the righteous man is punished amidst the general affliction, because he did not endeavour, by his prayers, to avert the Divine wrath from his contemporaries, as our Rabbies say, "Elimelech and his two sons, Mahalon and Chilion, were punished, because they, being the most righteous men of their age, did not intercede and pray for their contemporaries." (Talmud, treatise *Baba Bathra*, folio 91.) The cause why they were punished is, It behoves the truly righteous man to imitate the ways of the Deity: And

as He (blessed be He!) delights in the preservation of his creatures, and in their happiness, so should the righteous likewise delight in the preservation and happiness of his fellow-creatures. And as the Lord has declared through the mouth of his prophet, "For I delight not in the death of the sinner, says the Lord, but that he should return from his evil ways and live," (Ezek. xviii. 32), it becomes the imperative duty of the righteous man to contribute to the preservation of the creatures of his Lord, by exhorting them to penance, and by praying to the All-merciful in their behalf, that their penance may be acceptable: And when the righteous man neglects the performance of this duty, he is punished amidst his afflicted contemporaries, who suffer for their sins. Sometimes the misfortunes of the righteous serve to expiate the sins of the nation among whom he dwells: For as the Divine mercy delights in the preservation of his creatures, and the Divine omniscience knows that the righteous man will submit to adversity with resignation, and will not arraign the justice of Providence, therefore He appoints the righteous man to suffer for a time in order to expiate the sins, and be the ransom, of a whole people: Accordingly, our Rabbies say, "The death of the righteous is expiatory;" and this we likewise find expressed in Holy Writ, when the Lord commanded the prophet, "And thou lie on thy left side, and put the sins of Israel thereon: The number of the days that thou liest thereon thou shalt bear their transgressions: I have appointed for thee a number of days according to the years of their transgressions, three hundred and ninety days, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast completed this, thou shalt afterwards lie on thy right side, and shalt bear the iniquities of the house of Judah forty days: A day for each year have I appointed unto thee." (Ezek. iv. 4—6.) In this sense we explain the prophet Isaiah, when he says, in his fifty-second chapter, ver. 13, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently," &c. These words apply to the house of Israel, who in other places are by

the same prophet addressed as the servants of the Lord; as when he says, "And thou, Israel, my servant:" (Isaiah xli. 8:) And again, "Fear thou not, Jacob, my servant." (Isaiah xlv. 4.) Having designated the Israelites as the servants of God who is to deal prudently, the prophet continues, "Verily he has borne our disease, our pains he has suffered, and we thought him afflicted, struck of God," &c. (Isaiah liii. 4.) His meaning is, that when mankind behold the sufferings of the righteous, they think that he suffers on his own account, and are therefore astonished; but they are mistaken: He does not suffer for himself, but his afflictions are an expiation for the nation or tribe among whom he dwells. All these various causes may expose the righteous man to the pains of adversity: And, if we except the last causes which are enumerated, namely, his suffering because he neglected to perform his duty in admonishing his contemporaries, exhorting them to penitence, and praying for them to the Lord; or because his afflictions have been accepted by the Deity as an expiation for the sins of his contemporaries; we find that in every other instance his misfortunes result, not from a decree of Providence directed against him individually, but in consequence of a general decree pronounced against the nation, or tribe, or class, of which he is a member; or from the influence exercised by the particular situation in which, and the planetary aspect under which, he is born; or from the ordinary course of nature which his righteousness cannot alter or avert: For as we have said that the wickedness of the evil-doer cannot, and does not, exclude him from participating in the prosperity, which Providence has awarded to the particular class of which he is a member, unless and until his wickedness has reached that height, and his crimes are become so heinous, as to inhibit the good which otherwise would have fallen to his share, so that they counteract and render void, as far as he is concerned, the general decree pronounced in favour of the class to which he appertains:*

So likewise the righteous man cannot be and is not excluded from participating in the adversity which Providence has decreed against the nation or class of which he is a member, unless and until his righteousness has reached that height, and his piety has become so perfect, as to call forth the special protection and favour of the Deity, so as to counteract and render void, as far as he is concerned, the general decree of adversity pronounced against the class of which he is a member.

2. Another source of the adversity which the righteous endures, is the dispensation of Providence, taking cognizance of his actions, and directed individually against himself: For there is no man so righteous on earth that he should always do good and never sin: It is therefore possible that he may knowingly have committed some sinful action, which he either has not at all repented of, or his contrition for which is not so heartfelt and deep as it ought to be: And the Divine mercy, while it permits justice to take its course and to inflict the punishment due to his sin, tempers that punishment so far as to limit it to this his transient state of existence; so that having, by means of his suffering here, expiated his offence, he is permitted to partake of the eternal felicity of a future state, purified from every taint or stain of sin. For in the same manner as the Divine justice rewards the few good deeds of the wicked, by prosperity in this world, and then awards the punishment due to his many sins in a future and more lasting state; so likewise does the Divine justice punish the righteous for the few sins he has committed by adversity in this world, and then reward him for his many good deeds in a future and more lasting state: As our Rabbies say, "He whose good deeds greatly exceed his sins, is punished for his few offences in this world, in order that he may enjoy everlasting beatitude, without alloy, in the world to come." (Talmud, treatise *Tang-nith*, folio 11). Sometimes the righteous man suffers in order that he may be put on his guard against a sin which he feels inclined to com-

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., p. 165.

mit, or is pondering on; for it is an acknowledged truth, that when affliction befalls a truly righteous man, he does not presume to arraign the justice of Providence, but he examines into his own conduct; and if he finds that he is harbouring sinful inclinations, he praises his Maker, whose chastening hand has led him through love and mercy to take a correct view of his conduct, and to abstain from sin. It is in reference to the influence which adversity thus exercises on the mind of the truly

righteous that the Sacred Scriptures declare, "Whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth." (Proverbs iii. 12.) The meaning is, that as no man, however righteous, is free from sin, the love of the Lord is manifested towards the pious in those chastisements, which, while they prepare the heart for true contrition, and purify the mind, are likewise accepted as an expiation for human frailties; so that the sufferer, freed from the taint of sin, enters pure and without alloy into the kingdom of everlasting bliss.

(To be continued.)

To the Editor of the Hebrew Review.

17th June, 1835.

SIR,—Greatly as I admire your learned publication, I think there are many parts in the great work, *Moreh Nebuchim*, that would be in their right place, when inserted in a review, the object of which is, not only to translate Hebrew writers, but likewise to convince the public, that the ancient Hebrews are not all so hyper-orthodox as they are commonly called; but that many, even the great Maimonides, entertained notions which, although strictly in accordance with the spirit of Holy Scripture, are not tied to a literal explanation of every word thereof.

The *Moreh Nebuchim*, being itself a translation from the Arabic, I trust you will make allowance if I have not succeeded in an elegant, but an exact and true, translation of the highly-talented and philosophic author.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

28, Bevis-Marks.

M. H. B.

III. THE BOOK OF JOB.

MOREH NEBUCHIM.—PART III., CHAPTER XXII.

OUR opinion on the book of Job, (a part of the Scripture which, more than any other, is concealed in darkness,) agrees with those who consider it a parable to explain the different opinions on Divine Providence. The reader, is, we presume, aware of the notion formed by some of our Rabbies, who expressed themselves in the Talmud by the words, "Job never really existed, but is only a fable;" and of others who maintained his real existence, but did not at all agree as to the time in which, and the place where, he lived; so that some of them thought him to have been a contemporary of the patriarchs; others place him coeval with Moses;

others, again, fix his period in the reign of David; and, last of all, some class him among those who returned from the captivity of Babel; which differences only strengthen the opinion that he never existed. We may, therefore, come to the conclusion, that, whether the history of the book is a fact or not, that history which daily renews itself in the troubles and numerous evils which befall the very perfect and upright, the afflictions which the righteous often endures by the loss of his property, children, and even dreadful bodily pains, under which he suffers; that history which has even led men to despair both on Divine Provi-

dence, and to deny the supreme wisdom and omniscience of God. It is evident to the understanding of every rational man, that the first two chapters of the book, containing the sayings of Satan, the Lord's answer, and the deliverance of Job into his power, must undoubtedly be a mere allegory. However, it is not to be compared to parables common amongst us, but is one of the highest importance, involving the most difficult questions and doubts, and their solution; and revealing the secrets of the many ways of the Ruler of mankind.

We shall now proceed to point out those passages of this great allegory that deserve our particular attention, and mention the different opinions of those sages which first induced me to explain its hidden meanings. The first that presents itself to our reflection are the words, "There was a man in the land of Uz;" intentionally choosing a name for the place of his residence, which, although a proper noun, as occurring in Genesis, "his first-born Uz;" at the same time carries with it in the Hebrew the meaning of consulting and counseling, as if the author intended to warn and advise us well to weigh this counsel, to reflect and meditate before judging or approving of the validity of its different sentiments. He then goes on to relate how the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them; for he does not say, "that the sons of God and Satan came to present themselves before God;" which would have made them all appear to us of an equal degree, and of the same quality and station. But he says, "Satan also came among them," an expression intimating that he was not like them, invited, and expected to appear, but he entered unawares, being not an inhabitant of heaven, but engaged in earthly pursuits, as mentioned, "that he came from going to and fro *in the earth*, and from walking up and down in it," to show that the spot of his influence was on earth only. The author continues to relate, that the perfect and upright man, Job, was given up and delivered into the hand of Satan, who was the cause of all that occurred to

him, of the plagues that befel him, and the accidents that happened to him in regard to his property, his children, and his own body. This having been mentioned, we are introduced to the different doctrines of Job and his friends, as to the cause of his great misfortune, they being of the erroneous opinion that God Almighty, was himself the instigator of Job's sufferings, which did not befall him through the medium of Satan. It is remarkable, First, That the author does not attribute to Job either wisdom, knowledge, or understanding; but only the qualities of good morals and righteous deeds; for had he been a wise man, he would not have scrupled for a moment, nor entertained the least doubt of Divine Providence. Secondly, That the sufferings are mentioned to have gradually increased, so as to shake the resignation even of the firmest man. We find that there are men who would not be discouraged by, and even be indifferent, at the loss of property, but who would mourn and heartily grieve, and not be able to bear, the loss of their children; there are others, that would firmly bear and console themselves at the loss of children, but would lose their temper and be cast down by the burden of bodily pains; in short, all men would gladly exalt and praise the Lord for his righteousness and benevolence, when in happiness and prosperity, or even in their adversity, if only endurable, but when troubled with evils similar to those of Job, some would soon deny and entirely renounce their faith, at the bare loss of property; others would perhaps retain their religious belief even at this loss, but would give it up, if destiny should bereave them of their children: And, lastly, should there be some that would not be moved from their stand, and still adhere to their religious principles, notwithstanding these trying misfortunes, they would surely quench the last spark of religion would not for a moment hesitate to deny in their heart the existence of a Supreme Being, or break out into loud clamour and blasphemy, were illness and diseases and plagues, like Job's, to afflict them.

It must also be observed, that the first and second chapters, mention the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord; that in the first chapter, it is only related of Satan, that he came among them; whereas, in the second chapter, it is added that Satan came also among them, to present himself before the Lord. The term presenting oneself "before the Lord," in Hebrew, indicates a compulsion to appear before Him, and receive his commands, as a proof of which, serves a quotation from Zechariah vi. 5, when speaking of the four chariots, "And the angel answered, and said to me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth."

It is obvious, that the rank and capacity of the sons of God, or the workers of good, and of Satan, the worker of evil, are not equal, as the quality of sons of God, is more extensive and constant than his, he being also a degree below them, in the sphere of his movement. What more deserves our attention, are the words, "from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it," pointing out, that Satan is prohibited to rule over the soul of man, his only dominion being over earthly subjects, separating him from the soul, and limiting his power to the body only, as mentioned in the second chapter, verse 7, where the Lord pointedly bids him, "But save his life," *Nephesh*, נפש, in Hebrew expressing the immortal soul, the unextinguishable and spiritual life, that remains of man after death of the body, and over this life, Satan has no control whatever.

It may be here in its place, to quote a sentence from our wise men, who deservedly merit that title, as in their doctrines they explain what is doubtful, reveal what is hidden, and bring to light many dark passages of the Holy Scripture.

In the Talmud we read, "Rabbi Simeon ben Lakisch saith, that Satan, evil imagination, (or inclination to evil,) and the Angel of Death, are one, which every rational man will comprehend; as the one and the same function, is only called by three

different attributes, and that the effects ascribed to each of the three actually arise from one cause.

We likewise find in the sayings of the compilers of the *Mishnah*, the ancients say, "He descends and leads astray, ascends and accuses, obtains leave, and takes the soul." This will likewise explain to us the vision of David, at the time of the plague, when he saw "the angel with his sword drawn, stretched out towards Jerusalem," as this was only shown to call his attention to the cause of the plague. The same idea is manifest in the vision where the Lord told Zechariah of the transgressions of the sons of Joshua the high priest, c. iii. v. 1, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him; and immediately afterwards follows his rejection, as the Lord said unto Satan, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee." It is he also who was seen by Balaam, in the vision of his prophecy on the road, when the angel said to him, "Behold, I have come out to hinder thee."

Know that the word Satan is derived from the root שׁעָה, meaning going away from the right path, as Satan also leads man astray from the way of truth, and conducts him to the path of error and iniquity, as mentioned in Genesis, "For the inclination of man is evil from his youth."

This notion is also evinced in our law, when it says, "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart," in Hebrew, לִבְבְּךָ, "hearts," alluding to the inclination towards evil or good. Our sages also are of the opinion that the inclination to evil arises within man at his birth, as expressed, "The sin lies at the door;" and Scripture also saith, "from his youth;" whilst on the contrary, the inclination to real good can only be found in him after his understanding is sufficiently ripe. Solomon therefore wisely calls the inclination to bad, a great king; whereas the inclination to good, he compares to a poor but wise child, both in regard to the body, which he compares to a city; as he says, in Ecclesiastes, "A small city, and few people in it."

Having come to the conclusion that evil inclination and Satan are one, there remains no doubt that he is likewise an angel, because he may also appear among the sons of God; as well as the inclination to good, likewise represented as an angel, which maxim our sages illustrate by saying that man is always accompanied by two angels, one at his right and one at his left hand, viz., "the inclination to good, and the inclination of evil."

Thus far will serve as a preface to the historical part of Job; and we shall in the next chapter expound the different systems and opinions of Job and his friends.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AFTER we have expounded the purport of the book of Job in what has happened to him at first, we now come to the doctrines which were admitted by the five, namely, Job and his friends, that every misfortune which he suffered was known to the Lord, (His name be exalted!) and that the Lord brought all his miseries upon him. They were, likewise, all of the same opinion, that He can do no wrong, and that injustice cannot be attributed to him; maxims which you will often find even in the words of Job himself; and if you search attentively the speeches of the five, in their discourse, you will find that one of them spake almost in the same strain and to the same effect as the other, and that their themes are often repeated and intermixed and interwoven with the history of Job, the extent of his sufferings and afflictions, the sublimity of his righteousness, the narration of his virtues, the gentleness of his mind, and the purity of his actions.

There are, also, in the orations of his friends, words of comfort and consolation, that he might forget his sufferings, intimating to him, at the same time, how well it would be for him to be silent, and not to let loose his tongue as in a quarrel or dispute with his fellow-man; but to bow down to the decisions of the Lord in silence. But he responded, that the severity of his afflictions could not be endured, and would not allow him calmly to consider and pronounce what is proper; yet his friends unanimously maintain, that whosoever does good,

good will be done unto him; and whosoever does wrong, or evil, will be punished; and that if thou seest the frivolous, malicious, and wicked man prosper, know, and that be sure, that in his later years his condition will be changed, and that he does not die unless sorrows have afflicted him, his house, and posterity; but if thou dost see the servant of the Lord in adversity, doubt not for a moment that the Lord will heal the wound which He inflicts. This maxim is often repeated in the words of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, all of them agreeing in this respect. The main point, however, on which they were divided was the solution of the question, why the God of righteousness sometimes pours down the severest of his punishments, and the bitterest pangs, upon the head of the most perfect and innocent of mankind? Job was therefore inclined to think that the righteous and wicked were alike in the sight of God, to whom the whole of the human race was contemptible; that He who thrones high in heaven would not deign to look down upon the deeds of the dust-born. We hear him, therefore, in the course of his harangue, exclaim, "This is one thing, therefore I said it, he destroys the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent;" (Job ix. 22, 23;) meaning, that if the rod of punishment unexpectedly chastises any one that it meets, and sweeps him away, then we must naturally conclude, that He above scorns the cry of the innocent sufferer; as proofs of which he cites daily experience, and says, "One dies in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dies in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They lie down alike in the dust, and the worm covereth them." (Job xxi. 23—26.) He also supports it by referring to the prosperity of the wicked and their happiness, when he says, "Even when I remember, I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold of my flesh. Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?"

Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes," &c. (Job xxi. 6.)

Having alluded to their happiness, he proceeds to ask his opponents, if it were according to your view, that the children of the fortunate infidel should die after him, and their memory be blotted out; what cares he about the troubles that will happen to his posterity after he is gone, as long as he in his life is at peace? as he says, in verse 21, "For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst." He follows it up by the conclusion, that there are no hopes left when dead—that he has nothing to expect hereafter, but that all is buried in oblivion; he then asks, astonished, "Why did He not abandon the creation altogether, if he intended to withdraw his guidance?" questioning God, "Hast thou not poured me out like milk, and curdled me like cheese?"

This is one of the opinions on Providence, which has been adopted by many inquirers; and it is well known that this notion was considered by our sages as bad in the extreme; which is manifest in their proverb on one place, "Dust in the mouth of Job;" in another place they say, "Job intended to upset the whole dish;" meaning to deny all order and regulation in Providence. In another instance they say, that Job disbelieved the resurrection of the dead; they even say he commenced blaspheming.

But the passage (chap. xii. ver. 7) where the Lord addresses himself to Eliphaz and his companions, saying, "My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath;" they endeavoured to reconcile with their notion by defending Job on account of his great sufferings, that the Lord therefore did not

account his words to him as a sin, as the proverb says, "Do not accuse man, for what he utters in affliction."

And we may take it as a fact, and not as an allegory, that when the Lord thus addressed himself to Eliphaz and his companions, Job was already convinced of the extent of his errors, and repented of his former assertions, as he proves in the later chapters; and although at the beginning he held quite different opinions, it must not surprise us, when we consider that any one in his distressed condition would have been liable to the same weakness, particularly if a man is so severely tried who is conscious of his own innocence.

For whatever Job said in the first chapters, was before he attained to a true knowledge of God, whom he only knew by tradition, like the lower orders of people; but as soon as he became acquainted with the profound study of God, he confessed that true happiness consists only in that knowledge which is open to every one who seeks for it, and elevates his mind beyond these imaginary troubles. But Job, while yet involved in ignorance, and only listening to common sayings and traditions, considered health, riches, and children as the height of prosperity, and he then expressed himself accordingly. This he himself admits, when he says, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job xlii. 5.) The meaning of which is, I abhor what I formerly desired, and regret what I exclaimed when in dust and ashes, valuing earthly goods higher than real and spiritual happiness; and for this, although late, confession, it was that the Lord reproached his friends, saying that "ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath."

(To be continued.)

IV. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 176.)

JACOB continued for some time under arrest; but one day, when the caliph passed the place of confinement, in his way to the mosque,

Jacob addressed him, and implored his mercy and pardon. Hascham inquired into the cause of his imprisonment; and when he found that his only crime consisted in having been too lenient in the collection of the revenue, and thereby caused some detriment to the royal exchequer, he immediately ordered him to be set free, and restored to his former office. Jacob ben Gav accordingly resumed his authority; but having, in the interim, received the answer of R. Joseph ben Stanas, he no longer persisted in his demand that R. Henoch should resign; and the latter continued to hold his office of Ab-beth-din, or spiritual chief and principal judge to the Jewish community at Cordova. A spirit of party feeling and discontent continued, however, to prevail, and did not subside until the death of Jacob ben Gav. One of R. Henoch's relatives brought him the intelligence that his powerful enemy was dead, thinking that R. Henoch would rejoice at being no longer exposed to the active hatred of so influential a foe; but R. Henoch began to weep and lament for the decease of a man, through whose death the poor would so greatly suffer. R. Henoch continued to hold his office until his own death, in the year 1015, after civil wars had devastated Cordova, and the new kingdom of Grenada had been founded, and begun to rise into eminence. The last years of his life were embittered by sickness and poverty: The latter a consequence of his total want of cupidity and self-interest. The manner of his death was melancholy and untimely. It was his custom, on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, to mount the pulpit, accompanied by the principal members of the community, and there to read to his congregation the concluding verses of the Pentateuch. On such an occasion the old and decayed structure, unable to support the weight of those who accompanied him, gave way, and crushed the venerable Rabbi under its fragments. He must doubtless have been a man of great talmudic learning and profound penetration, united to a thorough knowledge of mankind and extreme sim-

plicity and generosity; as without these advantages it would have been impossible for him to maintain himself so triumphantly against his distinguished and powerful opponents. He has left no written works to enable us to form a correct estimate of his talents: And the reason was, probably, that he considered verbal instruction as more impressive, and therefore more calculated to arouse and develop the energies of the student: A principle which he had adopted in common with the oldest and most celebrated teachers of the Jews, who were fond of spreading the knowledge of their doctrines by means of verbal tuition. With his death a different system of instruction began to take root in Spain.

The literature of the Arabs and their eager pursuit of Greek learning, had been transplanted into Spain, where the great encouragement and protection afforded to men of learning by the caliphs of the Omiade dynasty, and their wealth and power, at a time when Bagdad was on its decline, invited the greatest of the Arab philosophers and literati to prefer Cordova to the east. Through them the studies of philosophy, poetry, chemistry, and mathematics, became greatly cultivated in Spain: And, favoured by the uninterrupted tranquillity and prosperity which during upwards of two centuries they enjoyed, the Moors or Arabs of Spain not only vied with their brethren of the east, but in process of time excelled them. The Jews did not remain behind their rulers in the attainment of knowledge: Philosophy and poetry were particularly cultivated by them. Less attached to the talmudic schools of the east, the more they advanced in their acquaintance with Arabian literature, the Jews of Cordova, Toledo, and other cities in Spain, content with an inferior degree of Rabbinical learning, strove to rank high among the cultivators of philosophy and poetry, and many of them had, previous to the arrival of the Babylonians, R. Moses and his son, attained a considerable degree of eminence and fame in these branches of learning. Amongst these R. Joseph ben Stanas stood foremost in

the estimation of the public and the royal favour.

The arrival of R. Moses, and his son being placed at the head of the community at Cordova, did, however, for a time, give a different turn to the studies of the Spanish Jews. The high learning of R. Moses, his personal virtues and celebrity collected around him the most talented of the Jews in Spain. The adventurous circumstances which had brought him amongst them, the patience and resignation with which he bore up, against the affecting loss of his wife and the degradation of slavery, excited a general interest in his favour. Joy at being liberated from the thralldom of dependence in which the Gaonim of the east held their western brethren, and the wish that their newly-erected school should emulate the older seats of learning on the Euphrates, and be able to maintain its independence of, and equality with, the far-famed Talmudists of Pumbeditha; all these circumstances combined to inspire the Spanish Jews with an eager desire for talmudic learning, and caused them to crowd to his school. We already know that R. Joseph ben Stanas was one of his pupils; the one who from his previous fame and high attainments was selected by the monarch to translate the Talmud into Arabic. This task occupied him nearly twenty years, during the whole of R. Moses' life, and prevented him from being otherwise active in directing the studies of his brethren. But his task completed, and his teacher dead, he again came forward to take a lead amongst his brethren. We have already related his unsuccessful competition with R. Henoch. This competition was not so much for office as for system. R. Henoch, educated by his father, R. Moses, and deeply imbued with talmudic lore, continued unaltered the system of instruction, which, during five centuries, and in the flourishing days of Sura and Pumbeditha, had prevailed in the Babylonian schools, and which rigidly excluded some branches of profane learning, and assigned a very subordinate station to others. R. Joseph ben Stanas, on the contrary, who could not reasonably ex-

pect to excel R. Henoch in the profundity of his talmudic lore, strove to carry off the palm in public estimation, by restoring Arabic science to the rank it held before the arrival of the Babylonian Rabbies; or, in other words, to place mundane knowledge on an equality with the Talmud. In this attempt we know that he failed. The causes which had combined in the first instance to gain the ascendancy for the Talmud, in the person of R. Moses, continued too much in their full and primitive force in the person of R. Henoch to permit any reaction; and the more firmly the study of the Talmud took root amongst the Spanish Jews, the more influential its principles became, the more it tended to exclude the pursuit of profane knowledge; and had the successor of R. Henoch been endowed with equal learning, consistency, and zeal for that system there can be no doubt but the victory of the Talmud would have been complete, and the Jews of Spain would in time have resembled their brethren of the east, and of France, or become what the Jews of Poland are at the present day. But many circumstances prevented this complete victory being achieved by the Talmudists. The adherents of R. Joseph ben Stanas and of his system were numerous and influential; and though they and their leader had been unable to overcome the superior influence of R. Henoch and the Talmud, they still formed a respectable opposition, until the death of R. Henoch, raised them again to an equality with their adversaries. The civil war which at and before his death raged in Cordova between the sons of Almanzor, each of whom strove to succeed the father in his power and dignity, devastated the city and dispersed the numerous Jewish congregation. The consequence was, that no regular successor to R. Henoch was appointed: And as Grenada soon began to rival, and even to surpass, Cordova, the Jews flocked to the former city, to which their school was likewise removed. And though considerable Jewish communities existed in Saragossa, Valencia, Malaga, Toledo, and other cities, yet Grenada took the lead, and maintained it

during many years. In this city, and at the court of the reigning monarch, Habus the Second, R. Samuel Levi (called Hannagid the Prince) possessed the highest influence, which he employed to promote the spread of general learning among his brethren. The manner in which he obtained that influence is so singular and characteristic of the extreme simplicity of the times, that we cannot refrain from relating it.

During the sanguinary struggles carried on between the sons of Almanzor, the city of Cordova was repeatedly plundered and devastated by the troops of the rival brothers, and their hostile competitors. The Jewish community there suffered severely in every respect. Many of the learned Rabbies, who had been formed in the schools of R. Moses and his son, R. Henoch, left Cordova, and dispersed, and sought refuge in the various cities of Spain; where, compelled by poverty and distress, they for a time renounced their studies, in order to obtain means of subsistence. One of the most learned, R. Samuel Levi, repaired to Malaga, where he commenced dealing in spices, and maintained himself in an humble way. His shop, or place of business, happened to be situated near the residence of a great Moorish chieftain, named Alkas Ben-el-Adif, a man of great talents, who was first privy counsellor and secretary to Habus, king of Grenada. As the duties of his office kept him continually at the court of the monarch, he but seldom could find opportunity to visit his own residence: And, as his household often had occasion to write to him, R. Samuel Levi was frequently requested to compose and write these letters. He readily undertook the task, and of which he acquitted himself in a style of elegance and ease, which commanded the delight and admiration, not only of those at whose request he wrote, but also of the great man to whom his letters were directed. When Ben-el-Adif again visited his own house, at Malaga, his curiosity soon induced him to inquire what scribe had been employed in writing to him? His house-steward owned that he had

availed himself of the talents and assistance of the Jew, Samuel Levi, of Cordova. Ben-el-Adif caused the Rabbi to be brought into his presence, entered into conversation with him, and found in him a man of extensive knowledge, great talent, and consummate prudence. During his stay at Malaga, he had abundant opportunities of convincing himself, that R. Samuel was capable of conducting the most intricate affairs, and every way worthy of his unlimited confidence: When, therefore, he returned to Grenada, he proposed to the Rabbi, to renounce his petty commerce, and accompany him to court, there to act as his secretary, and confidential adviser: R. Samuel consented; and henceforth became the friend and adviser of Ben-el-Adif, who followed his counsels, as were they given by an infallible oracle. At first, king Habus knew not that the manywise suggestions of Ben-el-Adif emanated from the Jew; but after some time had elapsed, the Moorish privy counsellor became dangerously ill. The physicians declared his case hopeless. The king came to visit him: They conversed respecting the critical state of affairs, and the king expressed his regret at the loss he was about to sustain, and owned he knew not whom to appoint to the office about to become vacant; the more so as the intestine wars, which at that time desolated the Moorish kingdoms in Spain, and the progress the Christian powers were making, rendered good advice both scarce and valuable. Ben-el-Adif recommended his own secretary, R. Samuel Levi, to whose wise and prudent counsels, he stood indebted for the fame he enjoyed, and the services he had been able to render the king. Thus, R. Samuel became the confidential counsellor of king Habus, and his influence with that monarch was boundless. During the life-time of Habus, R. Joseph governed Grenada with unlimited sway, and knew so well how to avail himself of the intestine divisions and foreign wars which raged in Spain, that Grenada soon outstripped every competitor for power, and became the most potent of the Moorish kingdoms. Shortly before the death of

the monarch, his two sons began to dispute the succession. The Moorish nobles, and the most influential men among the Jews, took different parts. R. Samuel Levi declared in favour of Badis, the eldest son, while most of the other leading Jews (zealous perhaps of his great influence) espoused the cause of the younger, Balkin. When the king died, a civil war was on the point of breaking out; but the younger brother suddenly abandoned his unjust pretensions. He did homage, and swore fealty to his brother Badis, who immediately was proclaimed king. Those who had opposed him, astounded at the unexpected desertion of their chief, fled. Badis was firmly seated on the throne, and R. Samuel Levi continued to hold his office of prime minister. Balkin, excited by his former adherents, once more conspired against his brother, and raised the standard of revolt; but he was defeated, and made prisoner by Badis: And as he soon afterwards became dangerously ill, the king prohibited his being supplied with medicines or medical advice, so that he died of his disease, about the year 1027.

This event, while it utterly destroyed the hopes of the malcontents, and left king Badis without a rival, raised R. Samuel to the highest pinnacle of power and glory; as it was universally admitted, that to his judicious counsels and prudent management king Badis was indebted for his success. The eyes of all the Jews in Spain were therefore, turned to R. Samuel, who fully justified the hopes and expectations of his brethren. He not only promoted the welfare of the Jews in the kingdom of Grenada, but his active exertions in their behalf extended all over Spain, North Africa, Sicily, and Palestine. He caused a great quantity of books to be copied at his expense, which he distributed among the poorer congregations: Many books he gave to indigent students; for he soon founded a

school, which was numerously attended, as well on account of his own lectures, as of his extreme liberality. His piety induced him to furnish the oil used in all the synagogues at Jerusalem; and his annual largess greatly contributed to assist poor Jews, both in the east and in the west. He kept up an intimate connexion with the most learned and celebrated Jews of his time, particularly with R. Nissim ben Jacob, ben Sahun; whose influence he employed to reconcile the Jews of Spain with R. Hai Gaon, of Pumbeditha. R. Nissim was very poor: R. Samuel not only supported him, but fixed on his daughter to become the wife of his own son, R. Joseph. In this choice, however, he was any thing but fortunate; for when the lady arrived, her diminutive figure and unpleasant exterior were so repulsive in the eyes of her husband that they outweighed the great wisdom and many virtues by which she was adorned: And, though R. Joseph was compelled to marry her, domestic happiness and connubial bliss did not crown their union.

R. Samuel Levi, called Hannagid the Prince, maintained himself in his high dignity throughout his life-time, during a period of thirty years. He is celebrated as a poet, although his style of writing is, by a subsequent critic, (R. Jehuda ben Solomon Alcharisi, author of the book *Tachkemoni*.) said to have been obscure, and to have required elucidation. He is likewise named, by the great Aban Ezra, among the principal grammarians whose labours have been directed to Hebrew philology. But it is chiefly as the founder of a school which combined the conflicting systems of R. Henoah and of R. Joseph ben Stanas, that he exercised a lasting and beneficial influence on the minds of his brethren, and paved the way for those universal scholars, who shortly after his time spread an undying lustre over the name of Spanish Jews.

(To be continued.)

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VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 180.)

He * used to say, "Man is beloved, for he was created in the image of God; but that love was greater still which made it known to him that he was created in the image of God; as it is said, 'In the image of God He made man.'" (III. 18.)

COMMENTARY. *But that love was greater still, &c.*—As man alone, of all the terrestrial creation, has been invested with the glorious distinction of being made "in the image of God;" and as that distinction confers on him the great and important advantages which we have just enumerated; || the preference assigned to man above all his fellow-creatures on earth, proves the great love entertained, by the Creator, for this the last and noblest of his sublunary works: Great, however, as is this love, it is excelled by that tender and paternal care, which did not leave man in ignorance of his exalted station in the scale of creation, but which, in declaring to him that he was the beloved of God, in whose image he was made, gave him a stimulus, and placed before him a beacon, by means of which he might pursue, and be guided on, his earthly career. The important truth, that "man was made in the image of God," was declared to Noah and his sons immediately after their preservation from the waters of the deluge, when, on their exit from the ark, they built an altar, and worshipped the Lord of the universe: When, after the signal judgment executed on a sinful generation, which perished in the floods of the Divine wrath, Noah and his family found themselves the

* R. Akeebah.

|| Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., page 177, et seq.

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sole survivors of their species, the inheritors and possessors of the great globe on which they dwelt: When, with the gratitude and joy which they felt for their own miraculous preservation, they mingled feelings of despondency at the paucity of their own numbers, and of terror at the judgment they had escaped, the repetition of which at some future period they might apprehend: When, actuated by these mixed feelings of gratitude, joy, despondency, and terror, they knelt at the altar they had erected, their Divine Preserver was pleased to afford them a proof of His Divine grace, and the consolation of His loving bounty. He therefore vouchsafed to bless them, to assure them that they would be fruitful and multiply, and would fill the earth: That fear and awe of them should possess all the animals of earth, and the birds of heaven, whatsoever creeps on the ground, or dwells in the waters: That every thing was freely given into their power, and appointed for their use. And having thus declared man to be supreme lord of the terrestrial globe, with power of life or death over the whole animal world, the Deity cautions man to respect the dignity of his own species, declaring that the reason why such great manifold and distinguished mercies are conferred on him is, because he is made in the image of God. And, as a further confirmation of his love, the Lord,

on that occasion, declared, "And surely the blood of your lives will I require;" &c., (Genesis ix. 6;) thereby to express the infinite superiority of man above the brute creation; for, whilst animals have no individual purpose in the scale of creation, and their existence is limited to the short space of time they live on earth, their soul, or animating principle, being terrestrial, and therefore perishable; man, on the contrary, has got an individual purpose in the scale of creation, and his existence is not limited to the short space of time during which he lives on earth; as his soul, or animating principle, is celestial, and therefore immortal. Accordingly he is under the special and direct superintendence of the Divine Providence; and whosoever hurries him before his time into the presence of his Maker, has not only frustrated the purpose for which he was called into being, but has injured his soul as well as his body, inasmuch as he sends him to his reckoning with all his sins upon his head, without allowing him time, by heart-felt contrition and real penitence, to appease the offended justice of heaven. Therefore man is placed under the special safeguard of Divine justice; and whosoever takes his life mars the image of the Creator, and incurs the wrath of the Supreme, who declares, "At his hands I will require it;" and in these words proclaims the great love he bears to the human race, and the cognizance he takes of every individual member of that race, not one of whom is to be deprived of life with impunity, as the murderer is certain of meeting with condign punishment, though he should escape the vengeance of human laws; for the Omniscient Judge of the universe declares, "I will require," and no human cunning or foresight can circumvent his knowledge, or render nugatory his word.

This Divine declaration,—while it stamps man with a degree of dignity and importance superior to all other sublunary creatures, by showing that every individual member of the human race partakes of the Divine love, and is under the protecting shield of Divine justice, because all men are "made in the image of

God,"—completes the precious boon which Divine mercy has bestowed on our species, by acquainting us with the true dignity of our nature, and impressing on us a just sense of what we owe to ourselves and to our brethren,—the whole human race. For, as our teacher justly observes, great as is the Divine love which created man in the image of God, it is excelled by that love which revealed to man, on the very highest authority his reason could require, that he is so created; or, in other words, that he is gifted with an immortal soul. Accordingly our teacher does not quote that part of Holy Writ where the narrative of the creation relates how man was made, and where the words צֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים "the image of God" first occur; (Genesis i. 27;) but he cites the Divine declaration made to Noah and his sons, and which, after enumerating the various advantages bestowed on, and powers delegated to, man, sums up the fulness of Divine love by the glorious and important announcement, that man is made in the image of his Creator; partaking in some degree, though at an immense distance, of the excellencies and perfections of the Holy One, (blessed be He!) the Great Source, whence the human soul is a direct emanation. And as the knowledge of this fact will lead man on to the further reflection, that, being gifted with powers so great, and qualities so noble, being moreover animated by an undying principle, which after a transient sojourn on earth is to return to the pure Source whence it sprung; these powers and qualities, and that immortal principle, were bestowed on him for a wise and beneficent purpose, which it is his duty to promote: And as these reflections naturally give rise to the question, "How is it in my power to perform that duty and to promote that purpose?" the mind of man becomes directed to the laws, statutes, and commandments, which the Divine mercy has vouchsafed to reveal unto man, as our teacher points out to us in his subsequent maxims.

We have commented to some extent on this precept of our teacher, because we consider it as one of the

most important which our *tanaim*, of pious memory, have bequeathed to us, and because it is calculated to remove a mistaken reproach, which prejudice and ignorance have tried to fix on our Rabbies; namely, that, from a spirit of overweening national pride, and religious arrogance, they have striven to raise their own people at the expense of all others, and to inculcate, in the minds of those who are guided by their doctrines, feelings and ideas hostile to the rest of mankind. That the odium which has been cast upon our nation and its teachers, in consequence of these ill-founded reproaches, and of the prejudice which they have engendered, has been, and is still, the cause of much and unmerited suffering to the Jews, any one acquainted with history will be forced to allow; but that they and their teachers have been greatly wronged, is evident, not only from the general tenor of their doctrines, but more particularly from the maxim on which we have been commenting; and which, while it elucidates, in a manner consonant to reason and true piety, the real meaning of the great scriptural command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself," also convinces every reflecting and impartial mind, that the great teachers of the Mishna entertained as just and exalted ideas of human dignity as the noblest mind could wish to harbour; and that, exempt alike from stern fanaticism or wild enthusiasm, theirs was the true spirit of rational and pure benevolence, which, including all mankind within the sphere of its operations, and acknowledging that active love was due to our brethren, the whole human race, as enjoined by the Divine law, did not attenuate that commandment, or fritter away its force, by assigning to it a meaning irreconcilable with nature or reason, and carrying its theory to an excess which renders it impossible in practice. And, accordingly, the effects their doctrines and instructions have produced on those who reverence them as teachers, and obey their precepts, and the manner in which they have operated to form the character of their people, have been most salutary, inasmuch as their precepts

have rendered the Jews generally humane and kind, not only to those of their own faith, but to every one, whatever his creed or country. That love of our neighbour, which is founded on gratitude or the recognition of benefits received, the Jews, as a people, possess in an eminent degree: For history, while it proves the faithfulness with which the Jews adhered to those to whom they had vowed their allegiance, affords us no striking instance in which they rewarded good with evil. The Sacred Scriptures show us, how those patriarchs, whose virtue, piety, and faith are recorded, as bright patterns for the imitation of their descendants, lived in union and concord with their heathen neighbours: Nor do we find that they ever violated the leagues of amity into which they had entered, or refused to perform those acts of kindness which others solicited at their hands. Such is still the character of the Jew. The professor of another faith, who evinces kindness towards the Jews in general, may in all cases reckon on their gratitude. He who grants his friendship to a Jew, has seldom reason to apprehend that the trust will be betrayed; and we do not hesitate to add, that were a nation, as such, to bestow their goodwill and confidence on the Jewish people, the return would not only be frank and cordial, but such is, and has at all times been, the character of the Jew, that his heart's blood would be spilt, and his last energies devoted, to uphold the cause of those whose kindness had given them a claim on his gratitude and faith. Such, at least, is the proof afforded to them by the pages of history; such the testimony borne to their character by those who, in the hour of need, have confided in them. If we find that the Jew avoids those whose prejudices induce them to hate or despise him, surely he ought not to be blamed, as it is not in human nature to court contempt, or to solicit contumely. But though he may shun intercourse with those from whom he has nothing to expect but hatred and contempt, yet his dislike does not become active or rancorous; for it is a fact which no

one at all acquainted with the statistics of crime will presume to deny, that the Jews are—almost to a man—exempt from those ferocious propensities that lead to the commission of crimes at which humanity shudders; and that, considering their numbers, their means, and the prejudice and obloquy to which they are everywhere more or less exposed, they contribute as large a stock of social virtues to the joint fund of the community in which they dwell as any other class of men; while the proportion of crime laid to their charge is smaller and less revolting to human nature. Such, we assert, are the effects produced by the doctrines of the Rabbies and their interpretation of the Divine law, which bids us to love our neighbours like ourselves; and if we are asked how it happens that they who in theory are so limited, should in practice be so perfect, we can only reply that moderation in all things is most salutary; that too great an extension seldom fails to produce attenuation, and to counteract the effects intended

to be produced; while reason and true piety never overstep that line which is at once in accordance with our duty and with the best feelings of our nature.

Having thus, we trust not unsuccessfully, attempted in few words to vindicate our great teacher, and our nation, against a reproach which, although unjustly, we have but too often been loaded with, and having for that purpose endeavoured, to the best of our humble abilities, to explain the sublime and truly philanthropic sentiments of R. Akeebah, and the intimate connexion in which they stand to the great principle of the law, we shall next proceed to comment on the other maxims of this great teacher, which are addressed to our nation only; as it is his intention—after having impressed our minds with a just idea of the excellence and dignity of our species—to point out to us the exalted station and useful office which the Divine wisdom has assigned to us in the midst of our brethren, the whole human race.

(*To be continued.*)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: “BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:” BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(*Continued from page 184.*)

3. THE third great cause of the adversity by which the righteous man is afflicted, may arise from his connexion with, or affinity to, the wicked; in the same manner as the prosperity of the wicked sometimes results from his connexion with, and affinity to, the righteous, as we have already demonstrated.* Thus the afflictions which befall the righteous are a consequence of the cognizance which Divine Providence takes of the actions of other individuals. That such is the fact, is evident from Holy Writ, and confirmed by everyday experience. Sometimes the wickedness of the fathers is visited on their descendants, be they righteous or ungodly: Thus death, which came into the world through the sin of Adam, is become the common lot of

his descendants—the whole human race, from which the most pious is not exempted. Again: The sins of Eli and of his sons were visited on their descendants, as the Divine justice had pronounced; (1 Samuel ii. 31—36;) and accordingly we find that Ahimelech and the priestly city of Nob were utterly destroyed. (1 Samuel xxii. 18, 19.) And though the punishment is not inflicted on the descendants of the wicked through any sentence pronounced directly against the former, yet it falls on them, although pious, from the natural consequences which attend or follow the deeds of their impious progenitor. Thus, for instance, the father was wealthy, but wicked: In consequence of his wickedness he was punished by the loss of his wealth. His children inherit not his wicked disposition; yet his

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., p. 166.

poverty descends to them, and they suffer from the effect of his sinful conduct. Or, the ancestors were, through their manifold crimes and impious deeds, condemned to the loss of their land—to exile and captivity. Their children, whose minds have become chastened and purified through the punishment inflicted on their fathers, become penitent and amend their ways; still they continue in a state of exile, suffering for the sins of their fathers: For, although their piety and virtue have not reached so high a degree of perfection as to remove and render nugatory the effects of their fathers' crimes and punishment, yet their righteousness is such that if his wealth had descended to them, they would have preserved it; or, had they been in possession of the land their fathers held, they would not have been exiled or driven into captivity. Thus, in the two instances we have cited, the children suffer from effects which are the unavoidable consequences of their fathers' crimes; and in this sense we can comprehend the Divine declaration, that he visits the sins of the fathers on the children, &c., even to the fourth generation. (Exodus xxxiv. 7.) But this visitation seldom extends as far as, or beyond, the fourth generation; as the vicissitudes produced by the ordinary course of events would by that time have neutralized the effects resulting from the cognizance which Providence has taken of the actions of the wicked individual.

4. The fourth great cause of the adversity which the righteous man suffers is, that his afflictions are sometimes conducive to his real good. These are called the chastisements of love, or trials, and may be of three different kinds: (1.) The perfectly righteous, who worships the Lord from love only, is visited with affliction, in order to cleanse and purify his soul from those little stains and petty transgressions from which even the most perfect of mortals is not exempt. He may have indulged in some improper feeling, or been remiss in the performance of some active duty; and though his errors may not call down upon him the Divine wrath, yet the justice of

heaven marks its displeasure at the minutest departure from the precise line of piety and rectitude. And though his offence,—committed through inadvertency, and persevered in or not repented of, through ignorance—does not lessen his inheritance of eternal bliss, and is not visited with direct temporal punishment; yet, in order that he may expiate transgressions committed even without his knowledge, the Divine love visits him with chastisement, which he submissively receives at the hand of his Creator and Benefactor; so that his perfect resignation redeems the errors into which he may have fallen; and, as the cause of this chastisement is hidden from the knowledge of man, the sufferings which it inflicts are called trials, or chastisements of love. (2.) The second kind of suffering which may be derived from this great cause are likewise called trials, and are ordained by Providence, in order to make known to the world what actually passes in the heart and mind of man, putting him to the test whether he is truly a worshipper from love only, or whether his piety is founded on a baser motive: As Holy Writ tells us, "For the Lord your God tries you, in order to know whether ye love him with all your hearts and all your souls." (Deut. xiii. 3.) It is a fact, confirmed by experience, that not every man whose intentions are pure, and who is upright in his love and worship of the Deity, in days of prosperity or of tranquillity, has fortitude sufficient to bear up against the pitiless peltings of the storms of adversity, or to hold fast by his faith amidst the wreck of his earthly fortunes and the ruin of his temporal hopes; and it is to put his inmost disposition to the test, and that he himself may know the strength or weakness of his own faith, and to what extent his good deeds come up to his good intentions, that the Lord subjects him to the unerring ordeal of adversity. Job, for instance, was a virtuous and upright man, who feared the Lord and eschewed evil; his thoughts and intentions were good and pure; still, his love of the Deity was not of that noble and exalted na-

ture that he could endure severe affliction without repining, or calling in question the Divine attributes of justice and mercy, thereby justifying the accusation of Satan, that he worshipped the Lord from the hope of reward and fear of punishment: As it is said, "Does Job worship the Lord for nothing?" (Job i. 9.) Those sufferings which befall man, in order to probe his inmost disposition, are likewise called trials, because through them the love and faith of the truly righteous is placed on its trial before the eyes of the world; and, having passed through the severe ordeal of adversity, stands confirmed in its sublime purity, and acquitted of every selfish or ignoble admixture. Accordingly our Rabbies say, "When afflictions overcome a man he should search into his conduct and examine his actions; if he find that he has been guilty of sin, let him repent and amend: As Holy Writ says, 'Let us search into our ways and examine, and let us return unto the Lord.' (Jer. iii. 40.) If he has examined and searched with a contrite heart and sincere desire to discover and correct his errors, but cannot find that he has been guilty of sins so heinous as to call down the adversity under which he is labouring, he may then be convinced that his are the sufferings of love: As Holy Writ declares, 'Whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth.' And if he submit to his trials with resignation and undiminished love, happy is he and great is his reward." In this maxim of our Rabbies they comprise afflictions of every kind that can befall man as an individual, and through the cognizance which Providence takes of his own actions. For when he examines, and finds that his sufferings do not result from the first cause which we have enumerated in the present chapter, (namely, the general decree of Providence against a certain nation or country, or against a certain class of society,) it next behoves him to search into his own conduct, to discover if his misfortunes arise from the second cause which we have enumerated, namely, the cognizance Providence takes of his actions. If these are sinful, it behoves him to repent and

amend; but if, on such strict and sincere search, he does not find himself guilty of sins, the just punishment of which requires that he should be visited by affliction, he may then be convinced, that his sufferings are trials to which it is his duty to submit with resignation. (3.) The third kind of affliction which may be derived from this great cause, is, the greatest proof of the Divine love, which visits the righteous with adversity in this his transient state of existence, in order to add to his happiness in a future state. For when the righteous man has already expiated his few errors, and has, moreover, passed triumphantly through the ordeal of long and continued misfortunes, the Divine love enhances the merit of his pure love and unshaken faith, by giving him abundant opportunities of proving that his good deeds are not inferior to his good intentions, so that the highest rewards of eternal felicity may be his.

The question may be put, that "as the Lord searcheth the heart and inward parts, and knows the true disposition of every man; as it is impossible to practise any deceit on Him before whom the true worshipper from love stands displayed in all his glorious purity; while the selfish worshipper from the hope of reward, or fear of punishment, cannot disguise or conceal his motives from His all-seeing eye; as thus the Omniscient can require no test to acquaint him with the true dispositions of his creatures, what need is there that the second kind of afflictions, which we have deduced from the fourth cause, those, namely, which are called trials, should at all befall man?" We answer, It is not just, that the reward of him who holds fast by his love and faith, notwithstanding the many severe blasts of adversity which assail him, should be similar to his recompense, who, having never been made to go through the ordeal of affliction, is, like Job, subject to the imputation, that he does not serve the Lord for nothing. Holy Writ tells us, "Let not him who buckles on his armour, boast like him who pulls it off." (1 Kings xx. 11.) Let not him

be confident of victory who has never fought in deed, however ready he may be to meet the foe, by buckling on his armour;¹ but he who, having fought the good fight of faith, returns victorious from the arduous contest may well pull off his armour and repose in the just meed of his toils and exertions; therefore it is that the Holy One (blessed be HE!) visits the righteous with adversity, that by the constant practice of his faith, his good deeds may keep pace with his good intentions, and his love of the Lord become more ardent and confirmed: For experience proves, that every resolution man has adopted, and every opinion he is called upon to defend, becomes more firmly rooted in his mind, and settled in his conviction, the oftener he is required actively to maintain, and to do or to suffer for, that which he considers to be right; whereas, opinions and resolves, which have never been forced into activity, are weak and wavering, and want that firmness and solidity which is the result of conviction, and can only be produced by the active exertions of the mind. Thus the righteous man, whose firmness is evinced in his resignation and submission to adversity, becomes entitled not only to the reward of his good deeds, as well as of his good intentions; but the more frequently he tries to practise good, the more confirmed he becomes in his good intentions. Accordingly, R. Moses the son of Nachman,* commenting on the words of Holy Writ, "To humble thee and try thee, in order to prosper thee in thy latter end," (Deut. viii. 17,) says, "to accustom thee to endure with submissive resignation, those afflictions with which it pleases the Lord to visit thee, in order that thy love may become more confirmed, and thy reward more glorious." Such is likewise the meaning of Moses, when, at the giving of the Decalogue, he says to the affrighted Israelites, "For it is to try you, that God cometh;" (Exod. xx. 2;) namely, the Deity appears in all the terrors of fire, storm, and thunder, in order that your minds may be humbled, and that you may become accustomed to

summon forth the best energies of your nature in his service, so that when the firmness of your love and faith are put to the trial, they may not be found wanting. Such is likewise the meaning of that other passage of Holy Writ, where it is said, "For the Lord tries you;" (Deut. xiii. 3;) namely, the Lord affords you frequent opportunities of becoming confirmed in your faith, and perfect in your love, by exposing you to the temptations of false prophets, who, by striving to mislead you, and wean you away from the purity of your worship, require that your noblest energies should be called into activity, so that you may stand the trial unharmed, and thereby acquire the reward not only of good intentions, but likewise of good deeds.

This we might consider to be a sufficient answer to those who inquire, why the inward disposition of man need be subjected to the trial of adversity. But the word "try," which is made use of towards Abraham, when he is called to bring his son Isaac as a burnt offering, requires that we should add a few short remarks. That the good intention was firmly seated in the mind of Abraham, is fully proved by the perfect resignation and unsullied purity with which he had passed through his former trials. His inmost disposition was therefore known not only to the Deity, but also to mankind.

But designing to bestow on Abraham the fulness of eternal reward, the Deity vouchsafed to afford him an opportunity of carrying his good intentions into effect, and of crowning his career of virtue and resignation with the strongest proof of the purity and firmness of his faith, which it is in the power of mortal man to give. And, as the knowledge possessed of an anticipated event differs from that possessed of the same event after it has actually happened, Holy Writ uses the expression, "Now I know that thou art God-fearing;" (Genesis xxii. 12;) although no new or additional knowledge was acquired by the Deity; but the meaning is, "Thy actual and perfect obedience has confirmed my anticipations: So that the knowledge

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. I., p. 58.

I possessed in thought has now been realized by thee in deed." In this sense Abraham himself had addressed his wife, and said, "Now I know that thou art a beautiful and good-looking woman." (Genesis xii. 1.) His meaning was not that he had not possessed that knowledge before, but that the time was come when the fears he entertained for her safety, and the dangers he anticipated on account of her beauty, were about to become realized. And although in man the transition from the knowledge of an anticipated event, to the knowledge derived from an actual event, causes a great and positive mental change, such is not the case with the Deity, as we have already fully demonstrated in the third chapter of this our fourth division.

The last kind of sufferings which we have described, when the Deity exposes the truly righteous to transient adversity, in order to enhance his everlasting felicity, are the highest degree of "afflictions from love." But these are not of the same class as the trials which overcame Job, or Hezekiah, king of Judah. Of the latter it is said, "Also in the matter of the ambassadors from the princes of Babylon, who came to inquire into the wonder which had been in the land, the Lord forsook him, (Hezekiah,) to try him, and to make known all that was in his heart." (2 Chron. xxxii. 31.) But Hezekiah could not stand the test, and fell: As Holy Writ tells us, "But Hezekiah was not grateful for all that was given him, for his heart became proud;" (2 Chron. xxxii. 25;) therefore his afflictions and trials were of the second class, which we have derived from the fourth great source; whereas the third class only overcomes the perfectly righteous, whose faith has stood the test of repeated trials: Accordingly our Rabbies, commenting on the words "the

Lord searcheth the righteous," (Psalm xi. 5,) say, "The potter, when he examines his vessels, does not take up those which are cracked and which at a slight blow would go to pieces; but he takes up the soundest and strongest vessels, which can stand many blows without breaking. Accordingly it is written, and 'God tried Abraham.'" (*Be-reshith Rabbah*, chap. xxii.) When, therefore, we behold extreme adversity visiting men who are truly righteous, like R. Akeebah and his associates, we must not arraign the Divine justice; for these righteous men suffer, solely in order that hereafter they may have the reward of good deeds and practical piety, in addition to that of good intentions. For no man attains to the degree of perfect love, until he has suffered actual adversity and poignant affliction, to which he submits with cheerful resignation. This completely meets the objection of those who say, "Why should the Deity expose the righteous man to adversity, since He knows that he will suffer with patience and resignation;" and which objection is, indeed, as unreasonable as were a man to ask, "Why did the Lord enjoin obedience to his commands, as knowing the thoughts of man, and able to judge of their readiness to obey, that readiness is sufficient, and He might dispense with actual performance?" Though good intentions meet with their reward, yet it is the good deed, the perfect and devoted obedience to the will of God, which is required of man. For very often the deed does not come up to the intention, while sometimes the deed in all its bearings equals the fullest extent of the inward resolve. It is, therefore, the good deed, and not the good intention only, to which Divine justice grants its reward.

(To be continued.)

III. THE HEBREW DANTE,

From the *סדר העתים*, for the year 5589—1829, page 14.

THE friends and admirers of poetry award the highest meed of praise to Dante the Italian, the first who struck the lyre to the lofty strains of a modern language, and convinced

the world that the high and soul-stirring spirit which animated the great poets of ancient days, Homer and Virgil, had not altogether abandoned the earth. He it was who,

after a lapse of a thousand years, again raised poetry to that eminent rank which is its due, and from which it had been prostrated through the impotent efforts of the nameless rhymers who preceded this great reviver of the noble art. Who knows not the fame of this great man? Who, that has any pretensions to education, has not read his great work, the *Divina Comedia*, which is translated into most languages of Europe? But whilst every one is acquainted with his great name, how few among the learned of our nation are aware, that our language can likewise boast of a poet, the immediate successor of Dante, who transplanted his metrical arrangement into the Hebrew; and, following in his footsteps, wrote a work so elegant and impressive, as justly to entitle its author to the appellation of the "Hebrew Dante;" for, like his prototype, his ardent genius winged its flight to the empyrean. The blissful abodes of departed saints threw wide open their glorious portals; and the souls of the good and virtuous men, who had been the ornaments of our people, passed before him, to acquaint him with their deeds, their sufferings, and their reward. But while the Italian only sings the men of his own generation, or, at most, those who lived a short time before him, the Hebrew, in his sublime aspirations, was carried back to the happy days when the Sanhedrim dispensed justice to, and promoted knowledge amongst, an admiring people. Accordingly, all the *tanaim*, the *amoraim*, and the sages their successors, are introduced to us: The events and vicissitudes of their lives, the distinguishing traits of their characters, and the degree of influence they exercised over their contemporaries, and over posterity, are narrated in an harmonious strain of mellifluous verse.

Accident put the writer of this article (Professor Lozati of Mantua) in possession of several old Hebrew manuscripts collected at Leghorn. Among them he found, to his great surprise, an epic poem, called ספר ההיכל, "the temple," by R. Moses di Rieti. "On perusing it," he says, "I was astonished to find a

work replete with poetic beauty and merit: The more I read, the more I was struck with the close resemblance between the author and Dante; not only with respect to the purity and elegance of the language, and the profundity of thought and force of expression, but also with respect to his subject, which is identically the same with the 'Paradise' of Dante. His style, too, like that of the last-mentioned great writer, is often obscure, so as to convey a meaning beyond that which meets the eye. The poem is divided into eight books, which, together, contain one thousand and twelve stanzas of ten hexameter lines each. The author has added notes illustrating his subject, and containing much curious information respecting the numerous sages and great men whom he celebrates. In one of these notes he says, 'R. Moses Maimonides was the father of R. Abraham, whose son was R. Obadiah the father of R. David, whose two sons were made captives and reduced to slavery,' and concludes with the remark, 'This happened in our youth,' which enables us to form a correct opinion as to the time in which R. Moses di Rieti lived. For R. Abraham held the office of his father, the great Maimonides, about the year of the world 4970; (1210 of the Christian era;) and, according to the ordinary course of events, we may assume that R. Obadiah was born before the year 5000, (1240,) and that the sons of R. David were carried into captivity about the year 5100 (1340). And as the author in his work mentions R. Hasdai Carascosa, who lived about the year 5156, (1396,) but does not mention R. Joseph Albo, who flourished about the year 1425, we may, from this circumstance, conclude, that the work in question was written some time about the year 5160 (1400). I was very desirous of knowing whether any of our subsequent critical writers or historians had taken any notice of this great author; but found him mentioned by no one except by R. Gedalia ben Joseph Jachija, the author of the שלשלת הקבלה, 'chain of tradition,' who says, 'R. Moses di Rieti wrote a poem on the history of tra-

dition; but as he did not pay due attention to chronological order, I have been able to avail myself of his assistance to a very limited extent only.' This is all that I can find recorded of this illustrious poet, and I therefore feel happy and grateful that it has pleased Providence to afford me the means of making known to my brethren, the house of

Israel, that the first who emulated Dante in the glorious career he had opened was a Jew: And that, as our language is rich in precious works on every science and branch of knowledge, it has likewise produced an epic poem worthy to rank among the most distinguished of any age or country.

IV. THE BOOK OF JOB.

MOREH NEBUCHIM.—PART III., CHAPTER XXII.

(Concluded from page 188.)

THUS far Job: But Eliphaz had also a doctrine of his own, on the subject of Providence, as his opinion was, that whatever misfortune befel Job was meted out to him by the hand of Justice, being the deserved punishment of his manifold transgressions. Hence his accusation, expressed in chapter xxii. 5, "Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?" And taking into consideration the generally acknowledged purity of Job's conduct, he reminds him of the weakness of human self-knowledge; when compared with the penetrating wisdom of the Creator and Searcher of the heart; saying, "Well mayest thou imagine in thy own mind thou art just and faultless; but does it follow, as a natural consequence, that thou art really so in the sight of God?" Of whom he says, in chapter iv. 18, "Behold, he puts no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly; how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed before the moth?" Eliphaz, therefore, concludes, that the destiny of man is nicely weighed by the hand of Him who judgeth the secret thoughts of his creatures, and that it is owing to ignorance alone if Job cannot discover what wrongs might have brought his merited punishment upon him.

Bildad, the Shuchite, however, maintained that not only the guilty receive punishment in this world, but that the innocent will likewise share the same fate; yet these last must not despair of Providence, there

being a world to come, where ample compensation will be awarded to them; and for one hour of suffering in this transient world, years of joy and heavenly bliss await them in eternal life. Hence his condolence to Job: "If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he will awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end shall greatly increase." (Job viii. 6.) Different from all these was the opinion of Zophar, the Naamathite, who believed that every occurrence is solely according to the will of God, and that we must not presume to inquire into the reasons of his deeds, nor ask, "Why has He done so, and not otherwise?" and on that account we shall never be able to find out the way of his judgment, nor the path of his hidden wisdom in whatever he does; for this is his absolute power and incomprehensible greatness, that he executes his high and unquestionable will; and the reach of our understanding is far too short to comprehend his concealed intents. Zophar, therefore, reproves Job in saying, "For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes; but O that God would speak and open his lips against thee, and that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom that are double to that which is." (Job xi. 4.) Again, in verse 7: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" We have now seen how different men think on the subject of Divine

Providence; and let, therefore, the book of Job be fact or allegory, true it is, that the various doctrines which it contains exist in the minds of our fellow-men; for the system of Job is like that of Aristotle; the doctrines of Eliphaz resemble those of our holy law; the maxims of Bildad we may compare to those of Mathila; and the opinions of Zophar accord with those of Azariah. Having thus illustrated these different axioms of most ancient date, we now come to the more modern principles of Elihu, of whom we are told that he was younger in years, but greater in wisdom, than his friends. He begins with upbraiding and reproving Job for the pride he entertains on the score of his great deeds; for his presuming to dive into the secrets of God, and calling Him to an account for the punishment inflicted upon him. He could only call it folly, and could only excuse his other three friends because their senses were on the decline, in consequence of their old age. His speeches abound in striking parables and sentences, so that the reader will marvel and think at first that he has not added one word or meaning to what Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar have said before him; but that he has only given us the contents of their orations in a differently composed harangue, and has only explained their opinions with other words; for he likewise admonishes and accuses Job; and, like them, he also praises the wisdom and justice of God, his wonders, and the mighty works of nature; and that the Almighty (blessed be His name!) may look with an unconcerned eye on the devout attitude of the pious, as well as on the insolent posture of the blasphemer; for the most cordial prayer of the pious can profit Him nothing, and the ungodly abuse of the reviler will rebound on his own head. Yet, if we penetrate well into his most skilful speech, we shall find some great and new topics presenting themselves before our understanding, which were not touched upon by any of the preceding speakers, though he, like the others, namely Job and his friends, very often repeats what has been said

before, and intermixes it with his own doctrines; and that to such an extent that common people have the erroneous belief that there was no difference of opinion amongst them, which, in fact, is not the case. We therefore state at once, that he believed in the mediation and interposition of the angels; illustrating it by the example of a man who is dangerously ill, so that his life is despaired of; but there might yet arise an angel who intercedes in his behalf, and prays for him; and the intercession of that angel, whoever he may be, will be received, raise the sick from his death-bed, and restore him to his former health; thus enabling him to pursue his previous occupations. Yet this mediation, and its successful effect, we must not, as he takes care to remind us, consider as an event often occurring, but as scarce and rare, as he expresses himself in chap. xxxiii. 23: "Yea his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness, then He is gracious unto him and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." Having then minutely described the delivery of the sufferer from the verge of the grave, and, having given us an animated picture of his joy at his restoration to the strength and vigour he before enjoyed, Elihu exclaims, "Lo, all these things God worketh twice or three times with man." * (Job xxxiii. 29)

This notion we find in Elihu's speech alone. He likewise says, that it is not the intercession of angels only, which will rouse man from his slumber, and remind him of his destination; but revelation, be it manifested in vision, dreams, or by any other kind of inspiration, will likewise produce the same effect on him; accordingly Elihu says, "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep

* The authorized English version renders it, "oftentimes;" but we prefer the literal translation, as we generally find an unlimited number expressed by *seven* or *ten* only, but never by *two* or *three*.

falleth upon man, in slumbering upon the bed." (Job xxxiii. 14.)

He then corroborates this opinion, and illustrates the marvellous ways of God by eloquent descriptions of many phenomena, such as rain, storm, thunder, lightning; and also the accidents to which mortal beings are exposed, such as plagues and diseases, which he mentions in chapter xxxiv. 20: "In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away," &c.; or mighty wars, that rage without intermission; as he says, "He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead." (Job xxxiv. 24.) As a proof of the sound reasoning of Elihu, we may observe, that when the Deity appeared to Job in a vision, and reprimanded him for his many errors, He also convicts him of ignorance, by arguments deduced from His mighty wonders and signs visible in heaven, and the great works conspicuous throughout His creation; such as the elements, and the astonishing difference in the nature of his creatures, from the greatest down to the most insignificant. Most beautiful are the sublime descriptions of the clouds, the heavens, the Pleiades, Orion, and the whole planetary system; the order and regularity of their course will teach any reflecting man, that a Divine Providence watches over the destiny of an individual, as well as over the course of the sun; as Elihu very properly observes, "Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?" (Job xxxv. 11.)

The Lord then represents before the imagination of the humbled, convinced, and submitting Job, the wonderful and majestic picture of the great Leviathan, whom he paints as the conflux or union of all the powers, qualities, and attributes, scattered and divided among all the other living creatures, which creep, move, walk, and fly; in order to show, that as we observe, even in this transient world, marvellous and strange beings, of which our weak and feeble mind cannot trace the origin and source, nor determine their real and natural qualities;—as

they are not created and formed in the same manner as we construct and build things;—it is vain for us to attempt to compare and find out a similarity between our arranging, guiding, and conducting of matters, and the unbounded wisdom with which the Lord (His name be exalted!) rules, leads, and provides for the whole of his creation; but we must undoubtedly believe, that nothing whatsoever is hidden from the omniscience of the Lord; (blessed be His name!) as Elihu justly maintains in chapter xxxiv. 21, 22: "For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." We may, therefore, in justice conclude, that His Providence is extended to every created being in a manner very different from our providing for them; and that His government is not like our guidance; that there is no other resemblance whatever between them, than in the name alone; that they cannot be subjected to the same rules, (as the ignorant assert,) for the actions of God are not like the deeds of man; and that, like the great difference between the works of nature and those of art, the ways, the objects, and Providence of God are different from, and superior to, the management and guidance which our limited understanding presumes to imagine, and would fain ascribe to Him.

If we minutely search throughout the whole book of Job, we discover the following principle as the leading feature, namely, that the foundation of faith and the surest guide to religion and morality is, to study and learn nature, that we may not be led astray by our imaginary knowledge, and judge rashly of the hidden and impenetrable intentions and designs of our Great Creator; and if man does attain this needful branch of learning, he will no longer be struck with the sudden changes of this life. Should accidents and misfortunes, ever so great, befall him, they will not shake his firm belief in Divine Providence, but even strengthen his love of God, as Job himself owns at the conclusion of this vision:

"Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes;" (Job xlii. 6;) which also our Rabbies (peace be with them!) expressed in

their proverb, "The pious act in love, and rejoice in adversity."

M. H. B.

V. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 192.)

THE union of these two conflicting systems, achieved through the learning, perseverance, and liberality of R. Samuel Levi, *Hannagid* "the prince,"—a title with which his admiring contemporaries invested him, and which the grateful acknowledgment of posterity has confirmed,—could not fail to exercise the highest influence on the minds of the Jews of Spain, in raising their intellectual attainments far above the level of their times: So that, with the intuitive acuteness and penetration which is peculiar to their people, they not only seized on those sciences which they considered as worthy of their attention, but attained as high a pinnacle of excellence as ever has fallen to the lot of any race of men. Accustomed to profound and correct logical reasoning through their Talmudic studies, educated under a system which permitted no faculty of the mind to remain dormant, and gifted with powers of imagination the most brilliant, those powers were not suffered to become frigid and lifeless, by being altogether confined to those Talmudical topics, which present so very monotonous a field to the labours of the enterprising and ardent student. But at the very point when their Talmudic studies threatened to become pernicious by monopolizing all their attention, philosophy, poetry, and other mundane sciences and pursuits stepped in, and lent their aid, in order to prevent the minds of the Spanish Jews from becoming irretrievably absorbed in a pursuit, which, however great its intrinsic value may be, has nevertheless produced the unfortunate effect of estranging the other European Jews from all temporal occupations, except inasmuch as their necessities compelled them to carry on some gainful trade, in order to provide for the urgent wants of their families. But with this solitary

exception, the mass of Jews in France, in Germany, and other countries, during the middle ages, knew not of, and cared not for, any mundane knowledge, nor—as long as their safety was not concerned—for any events that took place around them. The world became altogether indifferent to, and disregarded by, them. Retired within themselves, they neglected all external accomplishments and improvements; they appeared no longer at court, and even in their trading pursuits they were isolated. For money-lending, which was their principal source of subsistence, was carried on by means of verbal or written contract, without any social or friendly intercourse existing between the parties: Indeed there was no point of contact between borrower and lender, except the solitary transaction in which they mutually endeavoured to overreach each other; when the avarice and cunning of the one extorted advantages which the mail-clad grasp of the other strove to recover with equal cunning, but with more lawless rapacity.

Thus retired within themselves, shut out by their own supine indifference from all honourable participation in worldly affairs, the Jews of France and Germany, in the middle ages, like those of Poland of the present day, knew but of one pursuit, which, as it was the cause of their voluntary exclusion from the world, was likewise their great consolation under the degradation and subsequent misfortunes which that exclusion engendered. That pursuit was the study of the Talmud. Every other occupation was incompatible with this chief aim and object of all their labours. Profane knowledge was despised: Those who cultivated poetry, philology, or any other branch of human science, were looked

upon as frivolous triflers, who abused the time and powers which Providence had placed at their disposal. Those who felt within themselves that they deserved a more extensive scope for their mental activity, were discouraged, and branded with the name of Epicureans, or Infidels: And while the Jew daily became more estranged from the nations among whom he dwelt, until at last he was known to them solely in the unamiable light of an exorbitant and relentless creditor, we need not feel surprised that the most atrocious calumnies, which hatred and interest could invent, found credence when directed against a people of whose real character so little was known, and who, kept in the leading-strings of an isolating system, did nothing to dispel the prejudices which were continually gaining ground against them.

Such, however, was not the case in Spain; where, thanks to the liberal ideas disseminated by R. Joseph ben Stanas, and rendered triumphant by the influence of R. Samuel *Hannagid*, the Jew was taught to know, that he was not sent into the world for the purpose of excluding himself from all concern in that which passes around him: But that, partaking of the manifold blessings which the Deity showers on man, the best beloved of creation, it behoves him to evince his gratitude, by dispensing his bounties, as much as lies, in his power to his brethren of the human race: And that no speculative pursuit can equal or supersede that active benevolence and practical usefulness, which man is called upon to promote during his sojourn on earth. He was also taught, that, placed alone among the nations of the earth, the observed of all observers, he would infallibly become distinguished beyond all other men, for good or for evil, according to the use he made of the powers which Providence had been pleased to entrust to him; and that, as he rendered himself renowned or notorious, honoured for his good, or detested for his bad, qualities, his brethren, the Jews, would partake of his fame or share his odium: That, under such circumstances, it was his duty to strive

alike after mental and moral perfection; and to leave no branch of human knowledge neglected or uncultivated. Their great chief, R. Samuel, himself on the pinnacle of glory, power, and influence, had a clear view of the situation of his people, and knew and felt, that it was only by decided and real superiority of attainments and principles that they could overcome the prejudices which difference of faith and religious intolerance created against them, both amongst Christians and Moslems. Accordingly, he was intent on promoting a general study of all the then known sciences amongst the Spanish Jews; and, seconded by the zeal and intelligence of those whom his own example and liberality encouraged, he succeeded to an extent, which, while it fully realized his expectations, has enriched the nomenclature of Jewish worthies with names that challenge comparison with the most celebrated of any age or country. But whilst he thus became the patron of mundane learning amongst his people, he did not forget that they were Jews; and, as such, the ancient possessors of unrivalled treasures of traditional lore, and a system of instruction, which if properly applied would secure to his brethren those advantages he laboured to obtain for them. Accordingly he took care that due attention should be bestowed on the study of the Talmud; it still remained a principal, though not the only, branch of Jewish learning. Philology, philosophy, poetry, astronomy, physics, were the branches of profane learning to which the Jews chiefly directed their attention; but even these became tinged with a Talmudic shade. The mental powers of the Spanish Jews must command our admiration; but their attempts in belles lettres hardly satisfy the cravings of modern criticism. Still it must be confessed, that they were thoroughly imbued with feelings for the sublime and beautiful; and though we cannot award to them the palm of the most correct good taste, yet their judgment can never be called in question; and, compared to other writers, their contemporaries, even their taste commands respect. But our greatest

gratitude is due to their successful efforts to instruct and enlighten us on the most important of all subjects—religion, availing themselves of the lights of philosophy and science, such as they possessed, to prove by admirable and forcible reasoning the authenticity of revealed religion, and the strict conformity there is between the truths of Scripture, and those of philosophy and reason.

The moral worth of the people, who were under the guidance of such leaders, merits our particular attention. There can be no doubt but that they were far more moral and really religious than all other Jews in the world; for their schools strove to impress on their minds pure ideas of true piety and virtue: And although egotism and ambition might combine to undermine the impressions made by the instructions of their youth, their effects must have been greatly counteracted by the dread of public opinion and the fear of being shunned as immoral. Accordingly, though we often read of disputes and dissensions among the Spanish Jews of the middle ages, yet the subject of difference was seldom selfish or personal. Principles and opinions gave rise to disputes, but the interests of individuals seldom obtruded their noxious influence on public questions: And if once or twice it happened that ambitious individuals tried to assume the sway over their brethren, their want of success fully proved that the mass of the people were too wise and too virtuous to be misled by the sanguine dreams of ambitious visionaries.

The external relations of the Jews, and their social position amongst the Moors of Spain, ought always to have been favourable, as their moral worth was acknowledged by their rulers; and they were not disturbed on account of their religious opinions: But the influence of political events was against them. The Moors were divided by numerous competitors for royal power. Cities and provinces came under the dominion of mighty chieftains, and formed separate kingdoms, engaged in unceasing hostilities with each other: The Christians sought gradu-

ally to re-conquer what they had lost; and Spain became the seat of sanguinary wars, continued with but little interruption, during two centuries and a half. The unsettled and disturbed state which the incessant changes of government produced in most of the cities of Spain, was highly detrimental to the welfare of the Jews. Their schools were driven from one place to another, and their communities suffered many hardships. Still, amidst all these disadvantages, their social position was greatly superior to that which they held in every other country in Europe, and continued such to the very last day of their stay in Spain, above four hundred years after the days of their great benefactor, R. Samuel Levi.

This ornament to his nation bequeathed his offices, his power, and his influence to his son, R. Joseph Hallevi, who had inherited his father's abilities and learning, but who, nursed in the lap of power and prosperity, was animated by so inordinate a spirit of pride and ambition, that it eventually caused his destruction, and involved many of his brethren in his fate. The intoxication of rank and wealth turned his head; and though he was active and zealous in promoting the welfare of his brethren, the Rabbies acknowledge that he deserved his untimely end. After having held his important office during eight years, he was murdered or executed on the Sabbath-day, 15th of *Tebath*, (December,) in the year 1064. His son Abraham had the choice given to him, between embracing the Mahomedan faith, and being put to death. He preferred dying in his faith, and was hanged. An impenetrable veil covers the cause and history of this tragical event; the reason for which, after so considerable a lapse of time, it is impossible to discover. For although it is asserted that R. Joseph endeavoured to make proselytes, and to render the Jewish faith predominant in Grenada, history does not offer any evidence of that fact; it is more probable that some political intrigue between the Jews of Grenada, and those who had been exiled for espousing the cause

of Balkin,* led to the dreadful catastrophe; at least it is certain that the son of Balkin was the successor of Badis. This massacre destroyed the prosperity of the Jews at Grenada. Most of the survivors saved themselves through a hasty flight: Among them, the two sons of the last *Resh-Gelutha* Hiskiah, who had been put to death by the Caliph of Bagdad, deserve our attention. His two sons had, on that occasion, escaped and lived tranquilly at Grenada, sheltered and supported by R. Joseph. They now fled to Saragossa, where they found an asylum under the protection of the Christian king of Arragon. The wife of R. Joseph fled to Lucena, where the Jewish community prepared an honourable asylum for her reception. The school at Grenada was broken up, and the pupils of R. Samuel, and R. Joseph, (for he had succeeded his father as chief of that school,) were scattered all over Spain.

Among them the most celebrated was R. Isaac ben Jacob ben Baruch ben Alkaha, the confidential friend of R. Joseph. He was born at Cordova, of a poor but respectable family, and was educated by a learned French Jew, named Perigors; and having evinced uncommon natural capacities, R. Samuel Levi, *Hannagid*, the great promoter of learning and patron of learned men took him under his protection. He supplied the youthful student with books and means of subsistence, and paid the teachers whom he appointed to instruct R. Isaac. After the death of R. Samuel, his son R. Joseph continued what his father had

so nobly begun, and became the zealous patron of R. Isaac, whom he received into his own family, and spared no pains to perfect his education. Grown up to man's estate, R. Isaac became the attached and confidential friend of his illustrious benefactor, and the depository of all his secrets. Alternately residing at Cordova and at Grenada, he was present at the latter place when the sanguinary catastrophe occurred which proved so fatal to his friend. He himself escaped, as it were miraculously, and retired to Cordova; where having, through the friendship of R. Joseph, acquired considerable wealth, he settled, and devoted his time to the study of mathematics, astronomy, and Rabbinical learning. At great expense he recovered the writings of his unfortunate friend, which he caused to be numerously copied and disseminated. He himself ranks high among Jewish mathematical writers, and was likewise a poet.

His great talents as an astronomer gained him the friendship of Abul-Cassem ebn Abad, called *almothamad*, "the mathematician," king of Seville, who appointed him to the high and confidential office of Steward to the Royal Household. He likewise became chief Rabbi to the Jewish community at Seville, and held both dignities for upwards of twenty years; until the victories of Joseph ben Taschfin, king of Morocco, put an end to the royal dynasty of Seville, which, together with all Moorish Spain, was subjugated by the Africans. R. Isaac sought an asylum at Grenada, where he died in the year 1094.

* Vide Hebrew Review, vol. ii. page 192.

(To be continued.)

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VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Meschet Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 196.)

Beloved are Israel, in that they are called, "Children of God;" but it was a surpassing love which acquainted them with their being actually called 'the children of God, as it is said, "You are the children of the Lord your God." (III. 19.)

COMMENTARY. *Beloved are Israel, &c.*—Having first made us acquainted with the great and glorious fact, that all mankind partake of the Divine love, are brethren, and colleagues in the dignity which the Deity has been pleased to confer on their species, and that it therefore is the first duty of man to love his neighbour like himself, our teacher advances a step further in the progress of his instruction; and, having in the first instance given us a precept applicable to the whole human race, he now directs his maxims to the Israelites alone. To them he explains why they are honoured with the glorious appellation of "children of the Lord," and tells them: Though the Divine love has been alien extended to all mankind, yet a greater share of that love has fallen to the portion of Israel; inasmuch as they not only partake in the prerogative bestowed on their species as men, but are, moreover, singled out and distinguished through the covenant made with our father Abraham, to whom the Creator of the universe vouchsafed to promise, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed; that they (the descendants of Abraham) should be his peculiar people, and he would be their God; together with all those important duties and advantages which result from that covenant, and which we have detailed more fully when commenting on the

words, "*He who abrogates the covenant of our father Abraham.*"* But among all the endearing epithets which the Deity has been pleased to bestow on his chosen people, our teacher calls our attention to the most forcible expression of love and affection which the Deity has used towards them. For manifold are the expressions of Divine love, addressed to them. The Lord deigns to call them "an holy nation, and kingdom of priests:" As it is written, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy people;" (Exodus xix. 6;) after having, in the preceding verse, told them that they shall be "peculiar" unto him from among all nations. He calls them "the portion of the Lord, the lot of his inheritance:" As it is said, "When the Most High divided the people, when he scattered the sons of men, he fixed the boundaries of nations according to the number of the children of Israel. For the portion of the Lord is his people; Jacob, the lot of his inheritance." (Deut. xxxii. 9.) Numerous other passages might be pointed out in the Sacred Scriptures, in which the love of the Lord to Israel is pronounced in the most emphatic manner: Yet our teacher, when intent on proving the great and surpassing love which the Deity has evinced towards us, selects one passage only from among

* Vide Hebrew Review, vol. ii. page 102.

them all. His reason for so doing is, however, most wise: For when we attentively consider the various expressions of Divine favour which we have quoted, we find that they are all conditional, and dependent on the observance of his laws and the obedience to his commandments which He requires. Accordingly, the preface to the Divine declaration in Exodus, is, "If you will hearken to my voice, and observe my covenant, then shall ye be peculiar unto me from among all the nations." But from this positive declaration we can deduce the just inference, that if Israel do not obey the voice of the Lord, nor observe his commandments, they will not be peculiar unto him, nor an holy people and kingdom of priests: For all these advantages and dignities are conditional, and result from their performing their part of the contract which the Lord proposes to them, and which their non-performance renders void. Therefore, when they are reprov'd for their sins, the people which had been called "peculiar unto God," are told by the Lord, "My soul will loathe (detest) you." (Lev. xxvi. 30.) Instead of their being an holy people, the Prophet, in his reproaches, exclaims, "I dwell amidst a people of impure lips." (Isaiah vi. 5.) And the gracious promise that they should be "a kingdom of priests," is superseded by the threat that "you shall sink lower and lower." (Deut. xxviii. 43.) But to the fact of their being appointed and called to be "children of the Lord," there is no condition whatsoever appended; it is a distinction of which no ill-conduct can deprive them. To illustrate what we have now advanced, we will adduce the following simile: A king says to one of his sons, "If thy conduct is such as I approve of, thou shalt be governor of certain of my territories—shalt be considered as the first in dignity of all my children, and my favour shall reward thee; but shouldst thou misbehave thyself, I will dismiss thee from thy honourable offices, withdraw my favour from thee, and cause thee to be the lowest and least respected of my household." But though the son does misbehave,

and the father does carry all his threats into execution, still the culprit remains the king's son; it is a quality inherent in him, of which his father cannot deprive him. He may reject and disown him; he may heap punishments on his devoted head; the royal wrath may drive him into exile, or compel him to expiate his offences in captivity; but, however severe the chastisement which is inflicted upon him, he is still "the king's son." Such, comparatively, is the relation in which the Israelites, the descendants of Abraham, and inheritors of the blessing of the covenant, stand to the God of their fathers. For, although, when they sin and offend His justice, He no longer calls them His peculiar people, an holy nation, or a kingdom of priests; still, in the midst of their transgressions, He owns them as his children. Thus we find that the prophet declares, in the name of the Deity, "I have reared and brought up children, who have rebelled against me." (Isai. i. 2.) And again, "Woe! sinful nation, people whose misdeeds are heavy, seed of evil doers, perverse children!" (Isai. i. 4.) So that in the midst of the most bitter reproaches and the direst denunciations, they are still owned as the *children* of God. And, as we said before, that all men partake of the Divine love, because all are alike created in the image of God, be they virtuous or wicked; and that, in consequence of the prerogative appertaining to them all, by virtue of their species, and as members of the human race, their blood must not wantonly be shed, and it is sinful to vex or injure them; but, on the contrary, it is an imperative duty to love them and do them all the good in our power: So likewise the Israelites are distinguished by Divine love in being called "children of God" under all circumstances, and whether they be righteous or sinful. Such is likewise the opinion of our Rabbies; as we read in *Siphri* on Deuteronomy xiv. 1, "Ye are the children of the Lord your God." "R. Judah saith, 'If ye conduct yourselves like my children, ye are my children; but if you misconduct yourselves, ye are not my people.

R. Meir saith, 'Whatever their conduct may be, still they remain the children of God, even though every other distinction which belongs to them as inheritors of the blessing of Abraham, should be withdrawn from them.' In support of this opinion, R. Meir cites the prophet, who says, "And the numbers of the children of Israel shall be like the sands of the sea, which can neither be measured nor counted. And instead of its being said to them, Ye are not my people, they shall be proclaimed 'children of the living God.' (Hosea i. 10.) The concluding words of the prophet require that he should previously have said, And instead of its being said to them 'Ye are not my children;' but he does not use that expression, as, however sinful their conduct may have been, they never ceased to be the children of God; whereas the distinction of being 'his people' had been forfeited through their manifold transgressions." Thus we see that even when visited with the chastisement due to their offences, and while the Divine wrath had stripped them of every privilege and distinction he had promised them as rewards of their obedience, even then they did not cease to be children of the living God. And as the relation subsisting between father and son can never undergo any change, but remains substantially the same under every alternation of circumstances, it follows that the Israelites can never be supplanted by any other people or nation whatsoever; for they only are declared in Holy Writ to be "the children of God:" This quality is inherent in them alone; nor can they ever be deprived of this their glorious relation to their God, and cannot be discarded or supplanted. Nor will they, as a nation, ever be destitute of virtue, and adherence to the law; for they are children, under the control and authority of their heavenly Father; and though they should be tempted, by their evil desires, to rebel against His paternal rule, He has declared to them that he will in no wise relax his superintendence over them: As the prophet saith in the name of the Lord, "That which cometh into your mind shall not be

at all; that ye say, We will be like the Heathen, as the families of the earth to worship wood and stone: As I live, saith the Lord, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: And I will bring you out from the people and will gather you out of the countries wherein you are scattered with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out: And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." (Ezekiel xx. 32-37.) On this passage the Talmud beautifully observes, "This oath is a faithful testimony of sufficient proof, that we are the children of God, who chastises us for our transgressions, in order that we may amend and abandon our evil deeds: But we are never rejected or cast out from his paternal regard."

The great instruction which our teacher conveys to us in his present precept, is, that it is the duty of the Israelites, beyond any other nation, to worship the Lord their God from love: As it is written, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy might." (Deut. vi. 5.) For such are the instructive and innate feelings of filial devotion, that the son serves and obeys his father out of gratitude and love: And although he receives no reward for his services, he rejoices in his obedience, and the performance of his duties; for it is his father whose approving smile he loves to obtain. Therefore the true Israelite, a son of the Most High, feels a delight in obeying the commands of his heavenly Father. No hopes of reward, here or hereafter, sway him in the performance of his duties; entirely devoted to his God, no selfish feelings can find room in his soul; he seeks but the approbation of his own conscience, which is the voice of the Deity within him. Is he prosperous? He considers

himself as the favourite son, who dispenses the bounties of a loving father to his household. Is he afflicted by adversity? He knows it is the gentle hand of a just, merciful, and wise Parent that metes out his chastisement: As Holy Writ tells us, "For thou must know it in thine inmost heart, that as a man chastiseth his son, the Lord thy God chastiseth thee;" (Deut. viii. 5;) which the sage monarch confirms when he says, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his corrections; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth: Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." (Proverbs iii. 11, 12.) Therefore, in whatever circumstances the true Israelite is placed, his love and faith remain unaltered and unalterable. For, as in the days of prosperity, it would be the height of ingratitude not to love the great Author of all good, our Heavenly Father, from whom flow all the blessings we enjoy:—The want of which gratitude is pointed out as a reproach in Holy Writ, where it says, "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies," &c.;—as, in the days of prosperity, it would be the foulest ingratitude; so, in the days of adversity, it would, on the part of the Israelite, be a complete denegation of his filial duties towards his celestial Father; for well does he know that it is not out of hatred that the paternal punishment is inflicted on him; and that, however severe

the visitation, it is permitted for wise, salutary, and merciful purposes, although these may not be obvious to the human understanding. Therefore, in the midst of the most trying affliction, the Israelite remains true to his God and to himself; unshaken in his principles, and immovable in his love to his Father. The pious saying of Job, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God? and shall we not receive evil?" is ever present to his mind. This spirit of love, unlimited in its devotion, and firm under every extremity of fortune, has been again and again displayed by the Israelites. No nation has undergone so many and so severe trials as, during two thousand years and upwards, it has been their lot to experience on account of their principles, their unshaken confidence in His word, and reliance on His promises. No other nation could have borne up against the many calamities they have suffered and surmounted with unabated fortitude, because no other people can be, or is, inspired with those innate feelings of filial attachment which form a part of the very essence and being of a Jew: For his nation alone is proclaimed by Holy Writ to be the sons of the Lord their God. He alone is the subject of the pathetic inquiry, when the prophet, in the name of the Lord, exclaims, "Is Ephraim my dear son, or the child of my delight? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels yearn towards him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." (Jer. xxxi. 20, 21.)

(To be continued.)



II. COMMENTARIES ON HOLY WRIT.

PSALM XIX.

To the Editor of the Hebrew Review.

June 30th, 1835.

SIR,—As the object of your learned pages is, to propagate the knowledge of that most neglected, but not least valuable, branch of literature, which is devoted to the illustration of the most sacred of writings, I do not hesitate to submit to you the following extract from the version of the Psalms, by the celebrated Mendelsohn, with the very valuable com-

ments of the learned Rabbi Joel bar Judah Levi, commonly called Joel Briel. If, by your approbation and kind insertion of my humble efforts, I can in the least contribute to promote, in England, among my brethren, the cultivation of the immortal writings of our forefathers, my purpose will be attained.

I am, Sir,

Yours very obediently,

28, *Bevis-Marks*.

M. H. B.

“THE heavens proclaim the honour of God.

The work of his hands announces the firmament.”

IN this Psalm, replete with allusions to the works of God in the creation of the visible world as sublime as they are striking, the inspired son of Jesse impresses on our minds the conviction, that—

Collaterally with that especial revelation, limited to and reserved for the Hebrew nation, the moral obligations of which are consequently only binding on the race of Abraham, the power of God displayed his glory in unequivocal characters to the view of all mankind, and that His inexhaustible benignity inculcated in the mind of every individual of the human species the irresistible desire of searching the wonders exhibited to him, wherever he may turn his astounded gaze. Such is the power exercised by nature over the faculties bestowed on all men, that not one, even the veriest savage, can withstand being attracted to the worship of the Eternal through his works, and—though he often mistake the effect for the cause—it is still the cause he seeks to adore. Sensuality, in its most hideous abjectness, can never stifle the deep-rooted feeling with which we are compelled to admire the productions of God's creation; and the most effeminate chieftain of uncultivated barbarians stopped the progress of his unwieldy masses to contemplate the beauty of a plantain-tree. The Divine intention, in thus displaying the majesty of nature, even before the dumbest eye, evidently is to bestow on all “created in his image” an unerring guide—a direct interpreter of his will, not limited to time, place, or language; to instil into their minds the desire to love Him, their Benefactor; to admire Him, their

Creator; to fear Him, who rules them and the globe on which they dwell. In accordance with this purpose the Psalmist expresses himself, in Psalm cxiii. 3: “From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name is praised.” And we likewise read in Malachi i. 11, “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles,” &c. Nature is therefore the high theme of this Psalm, which claims our admiration, not only for the unparalleled beauty of the language with which the original text abounds, but also for the simplicity and irresistible truth of the principles laid down therein, and the importance of the moral instructions deducible therefrom. All its passages concur in confining the adoration of the Most High to no place or time, but declare combined nature to be His herald throughout the immensity of space. Although we, the descendants of Jacob, have moreover been blessed with the especial boon of immediate Divine revelation, whereby we have been charged with the observance of statutes and commandments, peculiar to us only: Still it is not less obligatory on the Israelite, diligently to study the truths conveyed to his understanding by the glorious light of nature, in order to understand the ways of God in his works, and to attempt, as far as our circumscribed faculties admit, at imitating His infinite love and His justice, as is more fully illustrated in חובות הלבבות, “the duties of the heart,” treatise חבחינה, “Research.”—The manner in which the heavens proclaim

the honour of God, is by the wonderful revolutions of the heavenly bodies, and the regularity of their course, declared by the learned Rabbi Kimchi to be as intelligible as speech. We must here invite the attention of the reader to the beauty of parallelism in Hebrew poesy. In the verse under our contemplation, the ideas are thus arranged, as transversely to explain one another as accurately as in their natural order: Thus the glory of God is as

manifest by the works of His hands, as the declaration pronounced by heaven is legible in the firmament. By *הַרְקִיף*, "firmament," is understood the immeasurable space wherein the heavenly bodies move in spheres untold, and in which are immutably fixed the orbits prescribed to them by the will of their and our Creator, without a prop to sustain them—without a tie to connect them; an idea happily rendered by the etymology of the word "firmament."

"DAY pours it forth unto day,
And night gives unto night this instruction."

THE Hebrew word *נִבֵּן*, translated by "uttereth," in the authorized version, conveys with it the idea of streaming like water, and is a highly appropriate figure of the constant current in which nature uninterrupt-

edly rolls on, ever since the universe arose from darkness. Thus the alternate change of day and night instructs us in that science, the beginning of which is the fear of the Lord.

"No doctrine nor utterance
Of voice inaudible,
Their chord resounds all over the globe,
Their discourse penetrates to the boundaries of the habitable world."

THE doctrine and words here alluded to, are distinctly different from any other declaration, in as far as the latter is finite, and only audible in a certain very limited space, whereas, the voice of nature loudly proclaims, through all infinity, the name ineffable to human lips; as the verse immediately following explains it. The metaphor here chosen, of a chord being extended through all the regions of the world, happily represents to us, that, as the chord is the instrument with which musical harmony is produced, so is the mazy, and, at the same time, con-

nected, course of the heavenly bodies, the immediate cause of that harmony which pervades all creation; but the rhetorical beauty of this figure is still excelled by the majestic truth of the comparison; for as a chord of an instrument is incapable of producing the slightest strain of harmonical sound, without the will of the judicious artist; just as little are the combined materials composing the universe capable of effecting that soul-inspiring accord above alluded to, without the direct and constant attention of their Maker.

"THITHER, where he fixed a tent for the splendid sun."

THE harmony of creation reaches up to the very place where the Lord assigned its dwelling to the sun. Through this, and the following verses, the Singer compares the sun to a man who withdraws at eve unto his tent, whence he steps forth again,

after having enjoyed his rest, to attend to his avocations. He has particularly made choice of the sun, as not only the most brilliant luminary; but also the one which is, for us, the most important.

“HE beams forth like a bridegroom from his chamber,
And joyfully, like a strong man, he runs his race.”

THE sun is here represented as starting for his course, full of that confidence with which a man, when sure not to go astray, but to find his way prepared for him, would set about his daily labours. His joy, as the grammarian Kimchi says, is an allusion to his beams so grateful to our views, so salutary to all animate as well as to inanimate creation, and productive of joy in all within their reach; thus substituting the cause for the effect, as is common in all poetry. Joy may also be truly said to be the share of the sun in the path assigned to it; just as man, (since, as we before remarked, the sun is here represented under the figure of a man,) if he follow, like that bright luminary, the road traced out for him by the masterly hand of his Maker, if he strictly adhere to the will plainly evinced by God in nature, joy will attend him; he will be really happy. The very word for happiness being in Hebrew, אֲשֶׁר, the root of which, is, יֵשֶׁר, “straight forward,” because none but such as follow the straight

road of virtue, without allowing themselves to be turned aside by the thousand allurements of vice, will ultimately be happy, and enjoy that degree of bliss, which is to be the lot of him only, who walks in the ways of the Lord.” Happiness is mostly expressed by the plural number in Holy Writ, as in the beginning of the first Psalm, אֲשֶׁר הָאֵלֹהִים, since perfect happiness does not consist only in the transitory gifts we enjoy in this life; but the yearnings of the truly wise are after the bliss of the life to come, where we know that wickedness will not prosper even in appearance, but will meet with its due punishment; whereas virtue, although often apparently neglected by Providence in this life, will enter into a realm of eternal joy.*

* It appears that the same analogy is to be found between the substantive, דָּוָה, “affliction,” and עִוָּה “crooked, perverse,” as in Ecclesiastes, מִשְׁתָּה לֹא יִבֹּל לִחְקָן. Thus the root of the word עֵוָּה “iniquity,” may be retraced to the same adjective.

“FROM the end of the heavens he departs,
Runs through his circle, until he returns to his goal,
And nought remains hidden from his beam.”

IN this verse our Sacred Author again shows us, that as the beams of the sun shed their bounty over every spot on earth, so the power of God demands at the hands of all

those for whom he causes his sun to shine, that they pay him reverence, and do his will as expressed in every work of his hands.

“THE law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing to the soul,
His testimony, ever sure, renders wise the simple;
What he established is upright and rejoices the heart;
Bright is his commandment, illumines the dullest eye.
The fear of the Lord is pure, lasting for ever;
Truth his judgment, and altogether just.”

ALL the above verses are parallel, having the sublime laws of nature for their object; the law of God being a translation of the word תּוֹרָה. תּוֹרָה means “form, picture,” and is consequently represented by nature, in which we certainly find the greatest perfections. Nor can he, who with any degree of attention investigates nature, refrain from

bursting forth in applause; he feels his soul overjoyed. Even the most simple loses the dulness which bedimmed his understanding as soon as he applies himself to the study of God in nature. The commandments of God are the parts of his creation which stepped into existence as he commanded them, according to the expressions,

כִּי הָיָה אִמֶּר וַיְהִי: "FOR he spoke, and it was so:

הָיָה צוּרָה וַיִּבְרָא. He commanded, and they were created."

(Psalm xxxiii. 9.)

PURE is the fear of the Lord which we arrive at by a contemplation of his works, as we read in Eccles: "The object of wisdom is the fear of God." The word here rendered by "object" being in Hebrew, רֵאשִׁית, commonly translated "beginning;" but as the Rabbins wisely remark, the end, in effect, is the beginning in the process of contemplation. Whenever we bend our mind on an undertaking, it is the end and accomplishment thereof to which we first of all direct our attention; this leaves the two-fold meaning applicable to the same word. "The judgment of God is truth," alluding to the established rules of nature, which are eternal as truth. The word אֱמֶת, "truth," is from אָמַן, "durable, lasting, true," there being

nothing permanent but that which is true. The works of nature, taken as a whole, are just; which means, that, however the various elements and component parts of creation may differ, and even be opposed one to another when in a state of separation, or viewed partially, we still perceive the highest degree of harmony in the whole of this mass of multifarious beings; nay, we even find jarring elements peaceably blended in the same objects. This, then, is the point on which the Psalmist dwells when he declares that nature altogether,—that is, as a whole,—is in just accord.

The eleventh verse is a continuation of the praises due to the wonders of creation. The text thus goes on:—

"THY servant was warned by them,

A high reward awaits him that searches them."

EVEN the great king David acknowledging having received the highest benefit from his apply-

ing himself to the studies of the Divine perfection through the works of creation.

"WHO notices his errors?

Protect me from unknown faults!

Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins;

Let them not have dominion over me:

Thus, free from crime, I may approach perfection."

As we may transgress either by want of knowledge or by premeditation, we are taught to address our prayers to God, that he may preserve us from either; for, as our Rabbies say, "Whosoever applies to

the Lord for his assistance in the hour of penitence, will find relief, and will ultimately, upheld by such consolation as the Divine mercy will administer to him, be cleared from sin."

"MAY the speech of my lips,

The thoughts of my heart, be acceptable to thee,

My Trust and Redeemer, eternal Lord."

UNLIKE many expressions of the lips, David confidently avows his words to be in strict consonance with the cogitations of his heart; that he looks upon the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth as his Redeemer from sins; both such as are caused by the frailty of our

nature, by which we are often unknowingly led into transgressions from the path of life, and such as we engage in from perverseness, when, like madmen, we cling to evil, even though we are fully aware of the dangerous road we pursue.

HAVING thus (and I hope not unsuccessfully) endeavoured to show the beauty of sentiments and of language, (although of the latter I can only give a very faint translation,) of this book of Scripture, which every person ought to study more than any other, it being almost the chief part of our daily prayers, and perhaps of the prayers of every other religious sect; it being likewise the language in which we address our Creator, and in which we express our love, our thanks, and our wishes; in which we implore his forgiveness, and crave his indulgence for our human frailties: it might be as useful as entertaining, in order to obtain a thorough knowledge of this book, to submit to the readers of your Review the learned preface of the commentator, where both the origin of poetry and music among the ancient Hebrews, as well as the use of their instruments, on different occasions, are introduced, and treated of with that accurate criticism which the author maintains throughout the course of his comments, and which the Psalms of David really deserve.

PREFACE TO THE BOOK OF PSALMS. BY JOEL BRIEL.

THE numerous passages in Scripture, wherein mention is made of the musical art and its effects on the minds of the people, induce us to believe that that noble gift of heaven had reached a high degree of perfection among our fathers in the Holy Land; although we are greatly at a loss to fix, with any thing like precision, the rules of musical theory in those remote days, or to display before our readers the then prevalent ideas on the beauty of harmony and melody: Nothing having remained of the notes which alternately fired and delighted the soul of the Hebrew, but the name of the instruments from which those numbers flowed. Still, although unattended by sufficient guides, we shall not be deterred from pursuing our delightful range on the path before us; since, if by our humble efforts we may arrive at a better conception of numerous passages, generally considered obscure, in the Divine Book; if we are happy enough to illustrate the names of the instruments serving as superscriptions to the Psalms; we shall certainly be amply rewarded for our task. If, on the other hand, I can present to the reader nothing strictly new, but must even openly declare that I have copiously availed myself of the works of eminent men, both among Jews and Gentiles,* I solicit

his indulgence, by submitting to his consideration that my intention was good, that the voluminous and rare works I found some support in, might not be within general reach, and would require too much leisure for the perusal of every one who ought to feel an interest in this subject. Stimulated by the desire to generalize whatever knowledge was saved from the wreck of time, and of which I might have been happy enough to become the temporary depository, I have made extracts from my predecessors, have arranged them in a manner I deemed explicit, and here usher them into the presence of the public, with the sanguine wish that they may be found worthy of their perusal, and with the cheering anticipation that my remarks may heighten among my brethren of Israel veneration for our forefathers, and salutary respect for the immortal works they bequeathed unto us.

We shall subdivide our essay into three parts:—

1. History of Music among the Hebrews, from the invention of the art until the dispersion of the Jews, after the destruction of the temple.

2. Nomenclature of the musical instruments.

3. Illustration of the scientific terms used among the Hebrews in their theory of music.

Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik; v. Forkel, Dr. Philos. Göttingen.

* *Ueber die Musik der alten Hebräer*; v. Pfeiffer, Prof. at Erlangen.

HISTORY OF THE ART.

From Jubal to Moses.

As the book of Moses¹ instructs us, Jubal, the son of Lamech, of the descendants of Cain, was the first who acquainted mortals with the harmony of sounds, and down to the present day, the learned Frenchman, Chardin, relates in the narrative of his *Travels in the East*, that the word for "musician" in the languages of Persia and Arabia is *Kani*, that is, Cainite; for as a teacher is called the father of his school, so the scholar may with great propriety be named son to the founder of the art or science he cultivates. The circumstance of the instruments made mention of in that part of the Pentateuch, "viol and harp," occurring also in numerous other passages of the Sacred Volume, proves to demonstration that the knowledge of the antediluvians was not submerged with them into the all-devouring waves. Josephus, expatiating on this topic, advances the fact, that the generations preceding the deluge, having been acquainted by Adam in a prophecy with the approaching destruction of the earth either by fire or water, his near descendants, dreading the total loss of their intellectual treasures, are said to have constructed very high and strong pillars, capable of resisting the influence of either element, and to have engraven and expounded thereon a memorial of all the arts and sciences in practice among them. Thus far Josephus, in his *Lib. de Antiq. Rer. Jud.* But the far more satisfactory and probable solution of that apparently arduous question is, that Noah and his sons, who, by their miraculous escape from the common fate of the then living world, formed an immediate connexion between the generations previous and posterior to the deluge, were, beyond a doubt, initiated into all the knowledge of the times, which they again faithfully imparted to their posterity.

On Jacob's returning to his native land, about five centuries after the deluge, Laban said to him on Mount Gilead, "Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from

me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp?" (Genesis xxxi. 27;) from which we are able to infer, 1. That a third instrument, the drum, had since been invented. 2. That they had already acquired the knowledge of two kinds of instruments, (stringed instruments and *tympana*,) so different in their construction and treatment. 3. That their musical instruments served as accompaniments to poetical effusions, or, in other words, that they composed lyric poetry.

Even during the soul-curbing affliction of dire slavery in the land of Egypt, the sons of Jacob did not relinquish the rational enjoyment produced by the concord of sweet sounds; for Holy Writ declares, that immediately on their release from the house of bondage, on which occasion Moses addressed his lofty hymn to the God of Israel, in gratitude for their supernatural preservation, "Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances." (Exodus xv. 20.) From the foregoing verse, we may establish, 1. That the care to delight the ear with music was entrusted to women, no mention being made of such an occupation by men; which, according to Niebuhr, is perfectly agreeable to the still prevailing custom of the east.* 2. That they heightened the expression of joy by the addition of dancing, the first principles of which they learned of the Egyptians, with whom, according to their historical accounts, dancing was an eagerly-sought pleasure; and, when we afterwards find the Hebrews engaged in the impious construction of the calf, incontestably an imitation of the Apis of Egypt, we find this abomination accompanied by the not less Egyptian dance. 3. That women were admitted to the worshipping of the Lord in hymns, to which point we shall have occasion to return hereafter. A new species of instruments, called wind-instruments, is introduced to our

* Vide *Reisebeschreibung v. Arabien, und andern umliegenden Landern.*

notice: The camp of the Israelites resounds with the warlike clang of horns and trumpets. Mention is frequently made of these instruments during the stay of the Hebrews in the desert, as Lev. xxv. 8 and 9; Numbers xxix. 1; x. 2; ix.; x. On mentioning these three instruments, drum, horn, and trumpet, the learned author of the

שלטי הגבורים* remarks, that however fit those instruments may be for their respective uses, they were altogether unfit to accompany the chanting prayers of the Levites blessing the congregation.

* שלטי הגבורים The Shields of the Mighty, by R. Abraham Leo Modinensis, also called Abraham de Porta Leoni, Physician at Mantua, about the year 1525.

(To be continued.)

III. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 200.)

CHAPTER XIV.

HAVING thus demonstrated that the dispensations of Providence are just, and that the objections urged against the justice of the Divine government, from the circumstance of the wicked enjoying prosperity, while the righteous suffers under adversity, are ill-founded, and result from a superficial and erroneous view of the system, by which the world, as well as individuals, is governed; and having successfully vindicated the principles of that system from any cavils that may be raised against it, our next duty is, to explain why these circumstances called forth the complaints of prophets and inspired sages: For, according to the opinion expressed by our Rabbies, "Moses himself was at a loss how to reconcile these apparent infractions on the rules of equity with that strict justice by which the universe should be governed;" and, therefore, when he supplicated the Deity and said, "Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me thy ways," (Exodus xxxiii. 13,) the purport of his request was, "Teach me the ways of thy government; enlighten my mind that I may comprehend those apparent inequalities in thy dispensations, which shock my reason when I behold the righteous sinking beneath the load of his afflictions, while the wicked is basking in the sunshine of prosperity." (Talmud, treatise *Berachoth*, folio 7.) Job, too, made this seeming unfairness of the Divine dispensations a subject of his complaints, as we have already shown: And Asaph, the psalmist, exclaims: "But

as for me, my feet almost gave way, and my steps had well-nigh slipped: For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." (Psalm lxxiii. 2, 3.) In a subsequent part of the psalm he alludes to the sufferings of the righteous, and says: "Verily, it is in vain that I have cleansed my heart, and washed my hands in innocency; for all day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." (Verses 13, 14.) In these few words he places before our mind's eye the picture of a virtuous man struggling with unmerited affliction. Other prophets likewise express their amazement on this subject. Thus Jeremiah saith, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they very happy that deal very treacherously?" (Jeremiah xii. 1.) Habakkuk saith, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: Wherefore, then, lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and art silent when the wicked devoureth the man who is more righteous than himself?" (Habakkuk i. 13.) He also saith, "Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me; and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slack, and judgment doth never go forth; for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth." (Habakkuk i. 3, 4.) The prophet Malachi saith, "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Where-

in have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of justice?" (Malachi ii. 17.) He also saith, "Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord: Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is in vain to serve the Lord: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." (Malachi iii. 13-15.) The sage preacher also exclaims, "There is a vanity which is done on earth, that there be a righteous man unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be a wicked man, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous." (Eccles. viii. 14.) Many other observations of the same nature often occur in the Sacred Scriptures, the explanation of which, doubtless, demands our best attention.

We therefore say, it appears to us that Asaph has, in the seventy-third psalm, arrayed before us all the various objections that can be urged on the subject in question, in order fully to answer and refute them; and accordingly, on a somewhat closer examination, we shall find that he has successfully solved all the difficulties which he himself had propounded; not only as regards the adversity of the righteous, but also the prosperity of the wicked. In order to do this, he has founded his arguments chiefly on the second great cause, which has a reference alike to both subjects.* Therefore he commences the chapter with a sudden exclamation: "Truly, God is good to Israel!" His meaning is: "Know that whatever of evil befalls the righteous man is eventually for his good." This meaning the Sacred Singer conveys by using the word אמת, "truly," or "nevertheless," by means of which the sentence stands as if he had said, "Although at first sight it does not

appear that the afflictions with which Israel (the righteous) are visited can in any way be for their good, nevertheless, it is a fact that such is the case. The knowledge of this fact, however, is not common to all, but is the portion of those alone "who are of a pure heart." All other men are liable to err on this subject; and, while under the influence of error, to maintain that the sufferings of Israel (the righteous) are actual evils, and not at all intended for ultimate good. The poet then goes on to tell us how near he himself had been to yield to that false impression: "But, as for me, my feet almost gave way, and my steps had well nigh slipped." And he explains to us the cause why he was so near embracing error, when he says, "For I was envious of the boastful when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." My reason was bewildered when I saw that constant prosperity which crowns the undertakings of evil-doers, and their uninterrupted welfare, until they die of old age, free from pain and in the fulness of happiness. "They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men;" but the effects produced by their increasing prosperity is, "that pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment." The two qualities most pernicious to the welfare of society take possession of their hearts: Pride leads them to despise the person of their neighbour, and violence impels them to trample on his rights; so that their existence becomes a scourge to all who live within the sphere of their influence.

Having stated the effect upon themselves, which attends their unmerited prosperity, he next proceeds to relate the impression produced on the mind of others, when they behold the inexplicable spectacle of the evil-doer thriving in the midst of his foul deeds. He therefore says, "Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily: They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue walked through the earth. Therefore his people return

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. ii., pp. 165, 183.

hither, and the waters of a full cup are wrung out to them." He enlarges on their happy state; to their corporeal health he alludes in the words, "Their eyes stand out with fatness;" and the flourishing condition of their affairs in the expression, "They have more than heart could wish." Yet so far are they from acknowledging the bounties of the Deity, that not only do they "speak wickedly concerning oppression," that is, make the sufferings of those they injure and oppress a theme for mirth, and a target on which to exercise their wit, but "they set their mouths against the heavens;" they deny that worship, allegiance, and gratitude which is due to the Lord of the universe, and scoff at the laws which have been enacted by Him and in His name. The consequence of their conduct is, that when "His people" Israel (the righteous) behold the impunity and undeserved happiness of the wicked, "they return hither," to their dwellings, their minds being agitated by doubts and repining at their own state, for "the waters of a full cup have been wrung out to them;" the bitterness of wicked thoughts, which flow from the heart, and of the wicked expressions which fall from the lips of the evil-doer, even as water flows and falls from a cup that is over-full, "have been wrung out to them," and instil their venom into the soul, which becomes lost in amazement, and assailed by cavils and uncertainties, which they know not how to repel. The frame of mind which this state produces, the Sacred Singer admirably describes when he makes his righteous man exclaim, "How doth God know, and is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold! these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and have washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." Behold the wicked oppressor, who fattens on the groans and tears of his victims! He thrives, he flourishes under the smiles of an approving Providence. His example proves that it is in vain we serve

the Lord; in vain we obey his commands, and perform those duties which the laws of virtue and of piety inculcate: For, although I wash my hands in innocence, and preserve my heart pure, although my conscience approves my conduct, and the protection of the Divine justice ought to shield me from unmerited affliction; yet, what is my lot? Each coming day brings me some fresh disaster: Every morning dawns on some new misfortune which awaits me: My virtue and piety are altogether unavailing, and can therefore not be acceptable to the Deity; for what does God know or care for the transactions of this world? Having thus carried to the utmost extent of which they are capable, the objections that may be deduced from the unequal distribution of good and evil fortune in this world, the Sacred Singer prepares to reply to and refute these objections. He therefore exclaims, "If I say, I will speak thus, behold I should offend against the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end." If I were to give way to doubts and reflections, such as I have now advanced, calling in question thy goodness, thy wisdom, and thy justice, I should be an instrument of offence, and a stumbling-block unto thy children; for I should contribute to implant in the minds of yet unborn generations a spirit of sceptical cavilling and discontent, at the dispensations of thy Providence. He then commences to explain, that when first he turned his thoughts to reflect on, and know, the system by which the Deity governs the universe, he found it so impenetrable, that the attempt became painful unto him, from a sense of his own insufficiency and the harassing uncertainty it produced in his soul; until he entered the sanctuary of God, or till he penetrated, in idea, into the mysteries of futurity, and removed the veil which covers the destinies of the soul in the world to come. This he calls the sanctuary of God, as being the place, shaded by the majesty of the glorious throne of the Lord,

whither the souls return after they have quitted their frail tenements of clay, and terminated their earthly pilgrimage. In this asylum and abode of departed souls, there are various degrees of exaltation, according to the greater or less piety and virtue which man has practised during his mortal career. There, he says, I understood the latter end of those evil-doers who gloried in their vices and prospered in their crimes.

But in this most holy place there was no hope for them. For it is in the nature of every being to combine with, and adhere to, that to which it bears affinity or resemblance, and to shun and detach itself from that which is opposed or hostile to its essence and principles. And as there are no two principles more decidedly antagonist than good and bad, it is impossible for the soul of the wicked to combine with that of the pious. Accordingly the Psalmist continues his explanation: "Surely thou hast set them in slippery places, thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation! as in a moment they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream, when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image." As the soul of the wicked is not attached to, nor has any hold on, the seats of the righteous, as it has no inward firmness which upholds it in the hour of trial, it glides away from the presence of the Great and Righteous Judge. Its place is slippery; it falls, and is cast down into destruction. For as they have exhausted the reward due to their venal virtues, through their temporal prosperity, the only claim they have on the Divine justice is for punishment: Of this they become aware, when called upon to give an account of their actions, and answer for their deeds. Then terror at the fearful responsibility consumes them; and while all around them is bliss eternal, they alone are desolate. The Psalmist then tells us what is their punishment, namely, that as in the hour of their mortal exultation, pride and violence predominated within them, so that they despised their brethren who were less smiled upon

by flitting fortune than themselves, they in their turn stand despised and neglected, far away from the throne of glory. For contempt is the real punishment, as glory is the true reward, of the soul, an immaterial being which is altogether intellectual: As we likewise read in Daniel xii. 2, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt: And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

Hitherto the explanations of the Psalmist have been limited to the first, and indeed most difficult, of the objections he urges, namely, the prosperity of the wicked: He next addresses himself to the task of explaining the adversity of the righteous. He begins with upbraiding himself for his want of knowledge and understanding, and says, "Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins: So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee: Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by thy right hand, thou shalt guide me with thy counsels, and afterwards receive me to glory." Although my reason cannot comprehend thy mysterious decrees, although my understanding is too feeble to dive into and develope the inscrutable counsels of thy wisdom, yet experience teaches me that "I am continually with thee," and under the paternal superintendence and protection of thy Providence; thou hast hold of my right hand, and keepest me upright amidst the many dangers that beset my path. Thou preservest me from many evils, which, in the ordinary course of nature, would fall to my lot:—As David likewise says, "My soul is attached to thee, thy right hand upholds me;" (Psalm lxiii. 8;) his meaning is, When my soul is perfect in its attachment to thee, and is entirely devoted to thy service, I feel, at once, that I am upheld by thy power; and thy Divine Providence protects me as effectually as if thine own right hand were stretched forth for my salvation:—

Asaph continues, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsels." In this my temporal state, I cheerfully submit to whatever thy wisdom has decreed; for I know that thy counsels guide me, and that, whatever fortune betides me, it is thy will which dictates, and thy mercy which superintends my fate. Nor is this all; but when that immortal emanation of thyself, the spirit of life which thou hast breathed into me, returns to its parent source, "thou wilt receive me into glory," that highest of all rewards, which thy justice accords to those who have fought the good fight, who have encountered adversity with firmness and resignation, and who have enjoyed prosperity without quitting the path of virtue. Thus thy justice stands vindicated; for, while eternal shame is awarded to those who in this transient state have abused thy bounty, eternal glory is the recompense of those who, in the midst of adversity, have sanctified thy name by their pious resignation and virtuous firmness. In raptures at having

discovered the solution of difficulties, which had so long perplexed his understanding, the Sacred Singer exclaims, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." The satisfaction I derive from knowing, that my unmerited sufferings in this sublunary state will hereafter be rewarded by thy approbation, is such, that all the bliss and felicity which the abode of the blessed can offer me is centred in contemplating thee, and delighting in thy approbation. Nor do the earth and its fulness tempt me to swerve from thee, for thy celestial radiance which bursts on my soul renders me indifferent to the joys or pains of the body. My corporeal conformation will be dissolved, the dust of which it is composed returns to its parent earth; but thy spirit, which is within me, liveth for ever, and triumphs in rejoining thee. This is the sublime meaning of the poet, when he says, "My strength and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever."

(To be continued.)

IV. ON THE MEATS FORBIDDEN TO BE USED FOR FOOD BY THE ISRAELITES.

AMONG the laws delivered to the Israelites through Moses, none have been so much held up to derision by scoffers and unbelievers as those ordinances which forbid the using of certain meats for food.

It betrays a very slight acquaintance with the Sacred Writings they endeavour thus to discredit, and less with the important object which pervades them throughout, that such persons, presuming on their superior sagacity, triumphantly ask—"Can what enters the mouth defile the soul? Are not man's actions of far more importance than what he feeds upon? Is it consistent with the elevated notions we ought to entertain of the Deity, to believe him occupied with laying down dietetic rules for a people?"

Such questions, however plausible they may appear to some, betray,

we repeat it, that the principal, indeed nearly the sole, purport of those writings has escaped the penetration of the wittlings who amuse themselves with stale pleasantries on a subject apparently beyond their comprehension.

We are in charity inclined to ascribe the conduct of those persons to negligence on their parts, in studying the Sacred Writings more carefully, rather than to a deliberate intention to lower their value in the minds of the unreflecting and of the yet innocent portion of the Jewish youth. Believing this, and anxious to reclaim the first from their error, and to preserve the two last from falling into it, we shall endeavour to show that the ordinances in question involve points of the highest importance to the eternal welfare of man, and that they are consequently de-

serving of being strictly observed by every Israelite, to whom they have been specially commanded.

Had it not been revealed to us by the Deity himself that he created the universe in love and beneficence, we might nevertheless have perceived that such was the motive for calling into existence the glorious and wonderful creations that surround us, from the unbounded provision that has been made for the happiness of every creature on this globe, according to the ability of each respectively for enjoyment.

The happiness of the brutes is confined to the gratifying of their appetites and passions, and even in them we witness that, through their instincts, they are preserved from injuring themselves by immoderate or improper gratification; but man has been distinguished above all other beings by having a living soul breathed into him, when he was first formed by his Maker. This imperishable part of man is that which is made after the image of his Creator; and the main object of the Sacred Writings is to inculcate that the Deity desires this His favourite should attain to happiness through the proper use of his intellectual nature, and that the true enjoyments apportioned to him are derivable from that source which so eminently distinguishes him from all other creatures.

But it has pleased the Deity to make man of a mixed nature. His corporeal frame partakes of that of other animals, whilst he is likewise possessed of an imperishable soul. He has, like the brutes, appetites and passions; but he is not, like them, endowed with instinct to preserve him from making an injurious use of them. If, therefore, we consider that this favourite of the Deity would not experience less of His care than the other creatures, as he is left without instinct to guide him in the use of his appetites and passions, it is evident he requires to be instructed in some way or other. That his own unassisted reason would not have enabled him to know what was proper for him to

do, and what to avoid, needs no elaborate arguments to prove; since no two persons, perhaps, could be found, who would agree on those points.

The great distinction then, bestowed on man, consists in his happiness being derived from intellectual exertions. His ability to contemplate and attain the knowledge of the sublime truths that tend to bring him nearer and nearer to his Maker constitutes his great privilege over other created beings; but the soul in the present state, being intimately connected with the body, receives nearly all its impressions through the corporeal senses, and a constant war is carried on, whether the soul or the body shall rule. It is a fact well known to persons of studious habits and pursuits, that their intellectual powers are affected by the description of food they take; it can, therefore, be no longer considered inconsistent with the dignity and wisdom of the Deity, that, having chosen the Israelites as his servants, to instruct mankind in what their true happiness consists, He should vouchsafe to instruct them on points which, in their present imperfect state, it was of importance for them to know and to observe, in order that they might avoid every thing that could impede or prevent their performing in a proper manner the office to which he had appointed them, and which gross and indigestible food was calculated to produce. And it is a fact, that the prohibited meats are considered unwholesome food by medical men even at this day.

The Israelites, above all people, are required to endeavour by deep study and reflection to penetrate the profound truths contained in the Sacred Writings, that they may be able to impart them to their children, and to the whole human race. Can we then feel surprised that every care was taken to fit them for so important an office, by strengthening their intellectual faculties, and bridling their corporeal appetites and passions?

A. A. L.

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VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 212.)

Beloved are Israel, in that they are called, "children of God;" but it was a surpassing love which acquainted them with their being actually called the children of God, as it is said, "You are the children of the Lord your God." (III. 19.)

COMMENTARY. *But it was a surpassing love, &c.*—After our teacher, in his preceding maxim, has told us the manifold great advantages and privileges conferred on man from his being created "in the image of God," he winds up his statement by pointing out to us that the crowning mercy which the Deity bestowed on the human race was, His vouchsafing graciously to declare and make known that man was made in His image: For this knowledge, that man is so supremely endowed beyond all other terrestrial creatures, is of the greatest importance to every individual of the human species, as our teacher fully proves.* In the present maxim, the sage *tanaï* pursues the same course, and, having shown us the fulness of Divine love, extended to the Israelites from their being called the children of the Lord their God, he next proceeds to tell us that the knowledge which we have of our being so called is of the greatest importance to us, and is the offspring of love surpassing that which declared us to be the children of the Lord. Accordingly he tells us, that it was a surpassing love which acquainted them with their being called the children of the Lord their God. And when we consider the prerogatives which that name confers on

them, and the duties which it demands at their hands, we shall find that our teacher is right when he maintains that the knowledge imparted to the Israelites, of their being the children of the Lord their God, enhances the love which called them to hold that great and glorious distinction.

The first prerogative which attends this knowledge is the fact, that the Creator and Preserver of the universe, the great Lord of all, "who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in;" that this Supreme Being is our Father. It is true that all mankind are alike his creatures, made in His image, and partaking of His bounty. But we are not only pre-eminently distinguished by being called "His children," but invested with a primogeniture among the nations of the earth: As Holy Writ declares, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born." (Exod. iv. 22.) And, having thus declared himself our Father, and us to be His children,—thereby establishing a relation which no circumstances can alter, and a bond of affinity which no misconduct on our part can sever,—we may rest assured, that, whatever chastisement the Divine justice decrees against us, and however rigorously we may be

* Vide Hebrew Review, vol. ii. pages 19, et seq.

made to expiate our numberless sins, still paternal love softens the stern decree of justice, and averts, at least, a part of the heavy penalty we have incurred. Let it not be said, that the abject condition to which our people are at present reduced, and have been for many centuries,—exiled from our own land, captive among the nations, deprived of settled habitations which we can call our own, and dependent on the caprice of those whose ill-will and hatred we have experienced more often than their kindness and commiseration,—let it not be said, that this our wretched state proves the Divine wrath, which exacts a fearful penalty for fearful crimes, rather than the paternal love which, with a gentle and sparing hand, corrects the transgressions of an erring child. But let it be remembered that the Lord is just as well as merciful; that he is Judge and King as well as Father; and that the greater His love for us has been, the more glorious the prerogatives, and the more extensive the knowledge, which He conferred on us, the more noble and beneficent the purposes for which he destined us; the more heinous has been our ingratitude, the more revolting has been our disobedience, and the more awful the responsibility which we have incurred and still daily incur: For far be it from us to pretend that we are better than our fathers, or that the punishment which they so richly deserved should, in justice, no longer be continued to us. If, therefore, the state to which we are at present reduced is more abject than that of any other people, it is the just reward for the ill use we made of our exaltation, at the time the Divine goodness had made us a theme of envy and admiration to all the nations of the earth. If we are exiled from the land of our fathers, and destitute of any settled habitation, it is but the meet return for our overweening pride and arrogance at the time when we dwelt in the Land of Promise, “flowing with milk and honey;” when our habitations were in that holy city, which is celebrated as, “beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, the

city of the great King.” (Psalm xlviii. 2.) If we are compelled to solicit the favours, and be dependent on the caprices of those who permit us to sojourn amongst them, it is but the proper recompense for that foul ingratitude which tempted us to rebel against our great Benefactor, who had caused us to dwell in safety and independence, “every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba.” (1 Kings iv. 25.) And if we have been called upon to lay down our lives in testimony of our faith, if fire and sword have raged against our martyrs for principle, why has it been? but that, having neglected to perform the duties of that sacred office to which we have been appointed, as a kingdom of priests, and instructors to the rest of mankind; having neglected, in the hour of prosperity, to perform our duty, sufferings and afflictions have been made the means of reminding us why we were called upon to be “an holy people,” and “the witnesses” of the Lord our God and Father: But if His justice did thus but mete out to us a punishment barely corresponding with the enormity of our crimes, His mercy still preserved us, His paternal love revived within us the feelings of filial devotion due to our heavenly Father; so that, in the hour of peril and of death, when life on the one hand, or principle on the other, is the penalty exacted from us for being Jews, we hesitate not in the choice, but readily abandon that which all other men consider as most precious, rather than sacrifice that which we so well know how to appreciate at its real worth. Again, and again, have Jews yielded life rather than renounce their faith: And the example of these noble martyrs has not been lost, either on their brethren, or on the nations among whom they dwell. The calm tranquillity, the unmoved resignation, the determined fortitude and inward felicity with which all these trying moments animated them, were bestowed on them by the love of their great Father. Never, throughout the long period of suffering and degradation, which their sins have brought upon Israel,

has His paternal regard been turned from them! Never has He forgotten that they are His children. As the Prophet declares, "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me! Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee." (Isaiah xlix. 14, 15.) He knew that we should sin and provoke His justice: While He placed in our power every incentive to virtue and every means of happiness, He left us in the uncontrolled exercise of our own free-will: But full well He knew that our perverseness would lead us on to misery. He, therefore, cautioned us; He foretold us that our sins would meet with a fearful punishment. The dire denunciations have become verified; not one of the threats pronounced against our disobedience but what has been fulfilled: But while thus we were made acquainted with the unexampled sufferings which our crimes entailed upon us, His mercy and paternal love took care to encourage us that our state of degradation and misery is finite; that when our sufferings shall have expiated our crimes, when the hour of probation is passed, a joyous restoration awaits the captive daughters of Zion, and the exiled sons of Israel. And until that happy hour shall come, which the Prophet has foretold when he said, "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls; and their kings shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee." "Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. The least shall become a thousand, and the youngest a mighty nation: I am the Lord! in its time I will hasten it." (Isaiah lx. 9, 10, 21, 22.)—Until this happy

hour shall come, and while yet the scourge of affliction weighs heavily upon us, the Lord vouchsafes to declare, "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, utterly to destroy them and to break my covenant with them, for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the Heathen, that I might be their God. I am the Lord." (Levit. xxvi. 44, 45)

What we have now adduced fully meets the objection with which we set out, namely, that our present state is irreconcilable with our claim to be "the children of the Lord our God;" as we have proved that the punishment we suffer is justly due to our sins, that it is finite in its duration, and will be succeeded by our restoration to the perfect enjoyment of all those prerogatives which His favour had conferred on us. Therefore, although the term of our punishment corresponds in its duration with the enormity of the offences to be expiated; and although, like children banished from the presence of their Father, we not only feel the privation of His favour, but are likewise exposed to the scoffs of those who tell us, "Ye are for ever rejected and cast out;" we feel within ourselves the consoling certainty, that our beloved Father will never abandon his children, that His love for us is unabated, and that the purpose for which He has destined us can and will be accomplished by no other means. Therefore, he has preserved us in the midst of every danger, has rendered our very sufferings instructive and beneficial to the rest of mankind, and consoles us during this probationary state with the assurance, "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel: Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest

through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." (Isaiah xliii. 1—3.)

(*To be continued.*)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(*Continued from page 223.*)

CHAPTER XV.

IT now remains for us to explain why, after the days of Asaph;—who, as we have demonstrated, embodied, in the seventy-third Psalm, the strongest objections which can be urged against the justice of the Divine government, as evinced in the unequal, and apparently unfair, distribution of prosperity and adversity, and who successfully met and refuted these objections;—subsequent prophets and inspired sages should have raised the same questions, and urged objections similar to those which the psalmist had so completely answered. In reply to this, we say that the inspired personages of Holy Writ did not, themselves, entertain any doubts, or advance any objections; for to them the explanation given by Asaph was satisfactory and conclusive. But though they harboured no doubts, and their faith was perfect, still they were so grieved at beholding the adversity of the righteous, and the prosperity of the wicked;—at seeing the man whose piety, virtue, and wisdom stamped him as most fit to be ruler of his fellow-men, pining in misery and affliction, ground to the earth, perhaps, by the ruthless persecution, and cruel oppression, of some unprincipled minion of fortune,—that their feelings of grief and indignation absorbed, at the sight, their better knowledge: For it is inherent in human nature, that the evidence of our senses should produce a stronger effect on us than what results from previous knowledge, however firmly implanted that knowledge may be, and however strong the conviction to which it has given birth. In support of this our assertion, that the effect produced by the evidence of the senses is more

powerful than that which results from mental conviction, we cite the example of Moses at the time he brake the two tables of the testimony. He had been informed by the Deity, that the Israelites had become guilty of the sin of idolatry: As we read, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go get thee down, for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt." (Exodus xxxii. 7, 8.) Here we see that the fullest information of all that had been done by the Israelites was afforded unto Moses: And he knew it to be true. Nor could he who interceded with the Deity in their behalf,—and who so fervently prayed, that the punishment with which Divine justice threatened them might be averted,—entertain any doubt of the truth of that which the Deity communicated to them. He was thus fully prepared for the scene which awaited him when he returned to the camp of the Israelites. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate to carry the tables of the testimony with him: He did not refuse receiving them, nor attempt to leave them in the mount, though he knew that he was about to bring them amongst a congregation of idolaters. But when he received from the evidence of his own senses the confirmation of that which he previously knew to its fullest extent, then, and not till then, did his indignation and grief so completely overpower him, that he threw down the tables, and broke them: As

we read: "And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he *saw* the calf, and the dancing. And Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." (Exodus xxxii. 19.) He knew that he would find a golden calf erected, and the Israelites busy in their Egyptian rites of worship. He knew this as perfectly when he descended from the mount with the tables in his hand, as when subsequently he entered the camp, and saw his knowledge realized. We should have thought, that, as the sight added nothing to his previous knowledge, it could likewise add nothing to his grief and indignation. Yet we find the case to be very different: For such is the nature of man, that the evidence of his own senses, and the impression which it produces, affect and excite him to a higher degree than mental conviction. Accordingly, when Moses saw the calf which he knew had been erected, and beheld the Israelites engaged in those rites which he knew they were performing, the sight produced a much greater degree of excitement than the previous mental conviction had done, and he threw down the tables, which till then he had quietly carried in his hands. Such was, likewise, the case with the prophets and inspired sages of Holy Writ. They knew that the Divine justice was perfect, and that the world is governed in strict accordance with the nicest rules of equity: Their mental conviction of the truth of this fact was as full and complete as was the mental conviction of Moses, that a calf had been made. Yet the sudden sight of some grievous affliction which befel a righteous man, or the great and undeserved prosperity which a wicked man enjoyed, and ostentatiously displayed, would so far excite their grief and indignation, that for the moment it overcame their better knowledge, just as the sight of the golden calf overcame the forbearance of Moses: And they, in a sudden excess of grief, burst out into lamentations and questions; just as he, in a sudden excess of wrath, threw down

and broke the tables. And that, even at the time they gave vent to their grief, and urged questions and objections, their mental conviction was true and unshaken, is proved by the very complaint of Jeremiah, which we have quoted.* He says, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee." His meaning is, I know that thou art always most just, and that thy government is most righteous. Yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments. I cannot restrain the indignation with which I behold the unmerited prosperity of the wicked, or the grief with which I see the virtuous man oppressed and afflicted; and therefore it is that I exclaim, "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Why are all they happy that deal treacherously?" (Jeremiah xii. 1.) Not that I question thy providence, or the justice of thy decrees; but my reason cannot resist the excitement produced by the impression of my senses; and I mourn that thy perfect justice should deem it needful so unequally to distribute the smiles and frowns of fortune among the sons of men.

This explanation may apply to all the different passages we have quoted; but as it will only do so in part, and the text of many of these passages requires some further elucidation, we go on to say, The prophets do not appear ever to have contradicted, or called in question, the illustration which Asaph had given of the justice and beneficence of the Divine government, but their doubts and complaints were in accordance with the confession of David: As it is related, "And God was displeased with this thing; (the numbering of the people;) therefore he smote Israel. And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: But now I beseech thee do away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have acted very foolishly. And the Lord spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying: Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things: choose

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. ii., p. 219.

thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. So Gad came to David and said unto him: Thus saith the Lord, Choose thee either three years famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of the Lord, even the pestilence in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now, therefore, advise thyself what word I shall bring again unto Him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait, let me fall now into the hand of the Lord, for very great are his mercies, but let me not fall into the hand of man." (1 Chron. xxi. 7—13.) Here we see David conscious of his sin, and ready to submit to the punishment which Divine justice is about to inflict on him; but he prays that the chastisement which he has deserved may be inflicted on him by the hand of the Deity, and that no human instrumentality may be employed against him; as the Lord is bounteous and forgiving, and tempers justice with mercy: Whereas, man is inexorably ruthless, and exults in the sufferings he inflicts on the victims whose evil fortune has placed them in his power. This material difference between the chastisement inflicted by the Deity, or the afflictions which spring from his paternal hand, and the sufferings which man is compelled to endure from his fellows, called forth the bitter lamentations of the prophets. Their complaint was: That although the dispensations of Providence are just, and therefore adversity can and does befall the righteous, still the visitation should be direct from the Deity himself, and not through the instrumentality of the wicked. For when mankind in general see that the virtuous man is delivered into the hands of the evil-doer, it tempts them to adopt erroneous notions respecting the Divine government, and the real nature of virtue and vice: So that the laws of God become disregarded, and the sacred precepts which they inculcate are slighted as useless and unavailing. In proof of this elucidation we cite

the complaint of Habakkuk, who says, "For the wicked doth compass about the righteous, therefore wrong judgment proceedeth." (Habakkuk i. 4.) Although he knew, and at once admitted, that Israel had incurred the full penalty of their sins, and that therefore their punishment was become indispensable, still the prophet cannot forbear to lament that the means employed in order to punish them should be the wicked Nebuchadnezzar. Their chastisement, he insists, should have been inflicted by the Deity directly, and without any intermediate agency the Lord should have visited them with pestilence or famine; or with grievous bodily ailments, such as Job suffered; or that Jerusalem should be destroyed by a convulsion of nature, as was Sodom; but not that, bad as they were, they should be abandoned to the exulting cruelty of one still worse than they. Therefore the prophet exclaims: "Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?" He does not say positively, "the righteous man," but uses the expression comparatively, "the man who is more righteous than the wicked evil-doer who devours him;" thereby intending to urge that, though the Israelites were far from being righteous, still they were far more virtuous, pious, and just than their destroyer, the wicked Nebuchadnezzar. Thus the objections of Habakkuk were not addressed to the fact of the righteous suffering adversity, while the wicked enjoys prosperity; but to the apparent injustice, that the wicked should be made an instrument of torture to the righteous. This explanation will likewise hold good of the complaint which Jeremiah urges against the wicked men of Anathoth, who conspired to poison him.

Thus we see that the objections urged by the prophets are not against the justice of the Divine government. They do not inveigh against the dispensations of Providence, and are willing to submit to such visitations as emanate directly from the Deity; nor do they deny the right

which the Divine justice has to constitute one evil-doer to be the instrument of punishing another, as we have already explained in the third cause of the prosperity of the wicked : * their objection is limited to the apparent inconsistency of a dispensation, which appoints the evil-doer to be the scourge of the virtuous man ; and which is calculated to bewilder human reason, and to lead men to adopt erroneous notions respecting the perfections of the Deity and the true nature of virtue and vice. By means of this inconsistency the law of the Lord becomes a dead letter, and its enactments and promises alike impotent, as Habakkuk saith, "Therefore wrong judgment proceedeth." (Habakkuk i. 4.) And in this sense Solomon likewise exclaims, "A righteous man falling down before the wicked, is as a troubled fountain and a corrupt spring?" (Proverbs xxv. 26.) His meaning is, that, as in a fountain which is troubled, or as in a spring the waters of which are impure, the evil which attends their troubled and impure state does not fall upon the fountain or the spring, but 'on those who use the waters, and who are grieved at their improper condition : So, likewise, when the righteous man falls before the wicked, the evil which attends his fall does not shake his own faith : For well he knows that the afflictions by which he is chastened spring from a merciful and just God, and are intended for his own good, and to expiate the few sins he may have committed. He also knows that manifold and numerous are the means and instruments which Providence employs and compels to do its bidding : So that it causes no indignation or repining murmur in his pious mind, that the Divine decree, instead of being carried into force by a serpent, a lion, or some other venomous and savage animal, is executed by a wicked man. The righteous man, therefore, is not misled by his present sufferings ; but it is the rest of mankind, who have not reflected on the dispensations of Providence, and on

the justice of the system by which the universe is governed : It is the rest of mankind, who are the actual sufferers by the fall of the righteous, and the exultation of the wicked. For they are tempted to exclaim, "Behold how the evil-doers triumph over the pious man : If Divine justice governed the earth, such a case could never occur. It is, therefore, plain and evident, that the Deity does not take cognizance of terrestrial events, but every thing is left to chance ;" and, from doubting, they will eventually deny the justice of the Deity, and endanger their own souls. Therefore it is that the prophets and inspired sages lament the means which sometimes are made instrumental towards carrying into effect the Divine decrees ;—not that the decrees are unjust in themselves, or that Providence has not the fullest right to select its own instruments ; but that the choice is often likely to produce an erroneous and dangerous impression on the minds of thoughtless beholders. To remove or counteract this impression, Habakkuk himself declares : "O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment ! O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction." (Habakkuk i. 12.) His meaning is : The evil-doer is but the scourge who executes the judgments of Providence against other wicked men ; or who administers the correction which is to purify the righteous man from the stains of his transgressions, in order that, his sins being expiated by his sufferings, he may inherit eternal life : While the impious evil-doer, who exults in oppression and wrong, is doomed to everlasting despair. Nor is it only in a future state that this great distinction between the oppressor and his victims is made manifest : Even on earth we sometimes behold the retributive justice of Providence. Thus Nebuchadnezzar and his seed, his power and his kingdom, are utterly perished, while the Israelites were released from the exile and captivity which he had inflicted on them, and still exist as a nation.

From all that we have hitherto stated, it is made evident and demonstrated, that the adversity which befalls the righteous is for his own eventual

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., page 166.

good; while the sins which the wicked man commits, through the abuse of his prosperity, bring on his merited punishment, or eventual evil. So that it is the event which, in this case, as in every other, decides what is good, or true prosperity, and what is evil, or real adversity. This is likewise the great key to all the sayings of the prophets and in-

spired sages of Holy Writ; some of whom adopted the maxims of Asaph and Job, in the manner we have illustrated; while others followed in the footsteps of Jeremiah and Habakkuk. But all of them were alike convinced of the perfect wisdom, beneficence, and justice, by which the universe is governed.

(To be continued.)

III. COMMENTARIES ON HOLY WRIT.

PREFACE TO THE BOOK OF PSALMS. BY JOEL BRIEL.

(Continued from page 219.)

A PERFORMANCE calculated to call forth the devout disposition of the hearers can only find its adequate echo in the solemn and pleasing tones of the viol, the ecstatic and bounding accord of the harp, or the melting flow of the flute. But these were not the voices heard among the Hebrews of those days. They were not yet in the peaceful possession of their land, flowing with milk and honey; where every one might repose in the shadow of his fig-tree after the completion of his daily toil, and listen to the heart-soothing strains of melodious instruments. They were a wandering race in the naked desert, surrounded by hostile nations, beset with remnants of pagan prejudices, and only accessible to coward fear or frantic joy. Their great leader insensibly prepared their hearts for that predilection for domestic happiness and peaceful enjoyments which forms one of the brightest characteristics of the ancient Hebrews; but while they stood in the dangerous lists with their enemies, no sound greeted the ear but the rousing drum and the startling trumpet, summoning them to the charge; and, after victory, the exulting ode which celebrated the defeat of their foes.

From Moses to Samuel.

A LONG period of time elapsed after the death of Moses, ere the Hebrews gained quiet possession of the land of their fathers; and those days of turmoil and warfare were not propitious to the cultivation of song. Still the flourish of the trumpet was their sole music; and if even, during

the four hundred succeeding years, the Israelites lived under the gentle sway of their Judges, still they enjoyed but comparatively little rest; for they did evil in the sight of the Lord, who, in his wrath, delivered them into the hands of the Midianites, the Moabites, the Philistines, and the children of Ammon, who afflicted them sorely. In those days of tribulation the melodious voice of the Hebrews remained silent, and they bowed down their heads beneath the yoke of their oppressors. However brilliant the qualities of some of the judges sent for their deliverance, they were not sufficient to re-establish the righteousness of the Israelites, who left but too often the road to which they were directed by their rulers. We are consequently in possession of but few of their productions of this kind from the epoch alluded to, and these are all of a warlike tenor: As, the triumphal hymn sung by Deborah and Barak; (Judges v.) the war-cry of Gideon, and the timbrel-dance by the daughter of Jephthah. (Judges vii. 2; xi.) This latter circumstance justifies us again in the assertion, that women were admitted to adore the Lord of Israel, both in private and public; and especially when any public festivity congregated the assembly for the purpose of expressing their gratitude to the Deity. (Judges xxi. 19.)

A brighter prospect opens on our eyes with the days of Samuel, the upright judge of Israel; during a number of happy and peaceful years, he led his people steadfastly on the ways of justice and virtue; he established peace between Israel and the Amorites: Barbarity vanished with

the tumults of strife; and, encouraged by the blessings of peace, music became one of the foremost favourites among the occupations of Israel. Samuel became the founder of the school of prophets, first mentioned at the inauguration of Saul: "After that, thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: And it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them; and they shall prophesy. And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee." (1 Sam. x. 5-7.) They are ever after denominated "sons of the prophets," whenever mention is made of them in Holy Writ. And if we may allow ourselves the digression, we shall succinctly inquire into the functions of that institution, there being so very little extant as to the sphere of its operations, and its particular character.

The first subject of our inquiry must be, to define, as nearly as we can, the precise meaning of the word נביא, rendered in English, "a prophet:" We find it said, "And Aaron, thy brother, shall be thy prophet," *Nabi*. (Exodus vii. 1.)

Jarchi, on that occasion, gives the following explanation:—

Nabi is a מתורגמן, or "interpreter," according to Onkelos, who translates it מתורגמןך, "thy interpreter;" and thus, whenever the word occurs, it means a man who addresses the people, and speaks to them words of admonition. It is derived from the same root as גיב שפתים, "the moving of lips;" and מהתנבבות, "he ceased exhorting," in Samuel; and in the language of this country,

France, in which he wrote,) it is called *prédicateur*, or "preacher." This appears perfectly correct, and if we follow this trace, we shall doubtless arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. The original meaning

of the word "*Nabi*," then, was a speaker or an orator; likewise a poet, as, "And Miriam, the *Nebiah*, (prophetess,) took the harp." (Exod. xv. 20.) And again, "And Deborah was a *Nebiah*." (Judges iv. 4.) And as neither of these two persons ever foretold future events, but, on the contrary, both excelled in the art of metric composition, the title *Nebiah* must refer to the art they professed. Thus likewise we find "the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, (*Hanebiim*), who composed to harps, psalteries, and symbols;" (1 Chron. xxv. 1;) and in the 3rd verse of the same chapter, "with their father, Jeduthun, on the harp, who (*Nibo*) composed thanks and praise to the Eternal." Likewise "a teacher;" for as the sages of the olden time, when they instructed the people, preferred conveying their doctrines in the more impressive language of poetry, which strikes the mind and rests on the memory, they are likewise called *Nabi*, as, "The *Nabi* that teacheth falsehood." (Isaiah ix. 14.) For this reason, likewise, was Abraham called a *Nabi*, in Genesis xx. 7, because he proclaimed, or taught, in the name of the Eternal. Thus, likewise, the predictor of future events *Roeh*, רוֹאֵה, or *Choseh*, חוֹזֵה, "a seer," is called a prophet, because they delivered the theme of their inspiration in language suited to the dignity of their mission, and the majesty of Him that sent them. Thus also false predictors of events, imitating that dignified or metrical mode of expression, are called *Nebiim*, as we find on many occasions. It appears, then, that any man who expressed himself in a manner more lofty and dignified than the ordinary course of conversation, is called a *Nabi*; for even Saul, when the evil spirit came upon him, and he uttered lofty, though incoherent speeches, is said to be מתנבא, and as we find Jeremiah called, on one occasion (xxix. 26), "this mad man, who is *Mithnabe*," or "uses lofty expressions." From this examination it results, that נביא is not of necessity a prophet or predictor of future events, but that it often is used in another sense; and this will enable

us more easily to conceive who were the company of *Nebiim*, and sons of *Nebiim*, mentioned in Scripture.

Before the coming of Samuel each man followed his own inclination; the knowledge of the Eternal was scarce; the Israelites had forgotten the law of their founder, and had learned from their neighbours—often their masters—corruption of manners and morals. When Samuel was appointed by the Lord, he saved his people, and restored them to a perfect belief in the God of his fathers: Wishing to prevent the possibility of a time again coming when the knowledge of the Eternal should be lost to the Israelites, he collected from Israel young men of superior capacity, whom he assembled in a seminary *Navioth*, in his dwelling at Ramah, whom he instructed in the ways of the Eternal, His powers, and the wonders He had shown his people; in order that they, in their turn, might become the teachers of the nation. Therefore is Samuel, likewise, named among the proclaimers of the Eternal; (Psalm xcix. 6 :) as he not only himself taught, but provided a succession of teachers. After the days of Samuel, these *Nebiim*, teachers or poets, spread throughout the land. In the days of Elisha we find associations of them in Gilgal, at Bethel, and at Jericho. These men considered themselves as Nazarites, or devoted to God; they were solitaries; separated from the rest of men; living by themselves in *Navioth*, or “huts,” and abstained from all other occupation. In their dress, too, they differed from the rest of men—wearing a hairy mantle—as we find by Elijah, the Tishbite, one of the greatest ornaments of their fraternity. And, although, in the progress of time, this institution, like every other of human origin, degenerated; yet the first intention was most properly adapted to fill the land with the knowledge and love of the Eternal: Nor did it fail of its object; for many were the holy and illustrious men who emanated from this seminary of Samuel’s foundation; nor can we doubt that David, the second father of Hebrew poetry, received his first instruction in this school.

THE FOURTH PERIOD.

Times of David.

As THE Eternal raised to the Israelites, in Moses, a liberator from the Egyptian yoke and the founder of their religious worship and social institutions; so, in David, he gave them a defender of those institutions,—a promulgator of that worship. It is a circumstance worthy of remark, and illustrating at once the spirit of the language of the people and of their institutions; that all the most illustrious men of Israel were poets; and not the men alone, but the women likewise. We have already mentioned Miriam and Deborah; at a much later period we find Huldah, the *Nebiah* prophetess, and others.

David, a poet by nature, by education, by his earliest pursuits, and the impression stamped on a sensitive mind, by the strange vicissitudes of an eventful life, found in poetry his great, his only consolation amidst affliction; the sincere, the only vent for his gratitude amidst prosperity. To his fame as a lyric poet he owed his first introduction at court. A lofty deed of youthful daring, inspired by that confidence in the help of the Deity which his acquaintance with the ancient metrical compositions of the Hebrews had taught him and prompted him to, introduced him to the admiration of his people. Envy, and the prediction that his kingdom was to be taken from him and given to his neighbour who was better than he, led Saul, on all occasions, to persecute David. In vain the generous friendship of Jonathan interposed. Saul persevered in his murderous purpose, and David fled. Alone, hunted from place to place, in want of the common necessities of life, nothing remained to him but his confidence in God, the knowledge of his rectitude, and ardent love of his noble science; and that science proved his friend and his consoler. When he poured out the inward workings of his mind, firm reliance in his God stood at his side, his despair was turned into resignation, his fears into hope; and if at times his undeserved sufferings harrowed his soul, and extorted from him com-

plaints against his causeless enemies, his consolation was, that the righteous Providence probes the virtuous, but punishes the evil-doer. Thus he strengthened his heart in those

admirable compositions that remain to us in the book of תהלים, "Psalms," until the hour of his liberation from suffering and adversity arrived.

(To be continued.)

IV. THE FIFTY-NINTH PSALM.

OF all the books of Scripture that of the Psalms is the most touching, the fittest to lead man to a knowledge of his duties, and to endear those obligations to him by instilling into the mind of the reader a steadfast confidence in the guidance of God and his Divine Providence. The sublimity of the words, in which the purity of the thoughts pervading the Psalms is conveyed to our understanding, has never failed to attract and instruct even those who could not approach the treasures of knowledge stored up in the original. However imperfect all translations must be which have for their purpose to display before our mental eye the inspired effusions of the Psalmist, through the medium of a language different in its genius and idioms from the tongue in which these were uttered; still, mutilated as they are, these translations allow us to form an idea of the real excellence of the work; they enrich our knowledge by many a golden lesson which with the dark path of our life is cheerfully illumined: And if, like a shadow, they do not retrace the expressive lineaments, they, nevertheless, render gigantic the stature of the Colossus they are to represent. Such is the fate of all the numerous translations of the Psalms, that of the Vulgate not excepted. We owe, therefore, our highest gratitude to such of our learned brethren, as have, by their erudite investigations, cleared up what appeared dark to the unexperienced, and removed those seeming discrepancies, the false light of which has dazzled many an unhappy eye. There is, especially, one misconception which has been productive of the greatest evil amongst scoffers and believers not fully initiated into the Divine truths. However wide the chasm between those two classes of men may be, it is but too true that the same effect

has been produced by the same means, but from different causes. This great stumbling-block has been the idea prevalent amongst superficial readers of the songs of David, that a spirit of revenge is visible in the complaints which the persecuted prophet utters against his enemies;—that, however moral his precepts may be when dictated in a composed state of mind, or when speaking of those accidents which may befall all men; yet he loses all his hal-lowing equanimity when he dilates on the plots and conspiracies formed against his life or his dignity;—that his warmth degenerates into rage when he pathetically pours forth his accusations against his ungrateful sovereign. He then knows no bounds, and impresses us with a very feeble idea of his meekness—that quality so inseparable from true piety. Nay, this temperament of the mind, or, more properly speaking, its expressions, stand in direct opposition to the spirit of Mosaism, is unadverted on in numerous passages of the *Torah*, and by David himself, in his less-impassioned moments. David moreover styles himself חסיד, "bountiful;" thus assuming a title expressive of the highest degree of virtue attainable by man; for whereas the צדיק, "righteous man," confines himself to the rigid, but bare, observance of the precepts which the law inculcates, the חסיד wishes to extend his virtue beyond the line prescribed, as the Rabbins express it, לפנים משורת הדין, "beyond the line of justice." The short-lived triumph which the herd of scoffers find in this estimate of the character of David is easily imagined; nor would their unmeaning railing be worthy of a refutation.

But much more baneful was the influence which such an erroneous construction of the word of God

was likely to effect, and did effect, on the untutored minds of many conscientious believers. They thought that they were called upon, by the example of the king whom God declared to be "a man after his own heart," to wreak vengeance on the lives and honours of those who had wronged them—they considered themselves as champions of the Deity, and therefore they overwhelmed with imprecations, and doomed to everlasting sufferings, those whom they suspected to be enemies of God. And all this worse-than-heathenish abomination, they attempted to justify by the example of our blessed king David, whose rules breathe nothing but the purest morality, are a solace in adversity, and tend in every line to repress within due bounds the exulting spirit of the prosperous, and to teach humility as the root of all social virtues.

Moses Mendelsohn, the great restorer of Hebrew literature, and its appendix—Hebrew morality, among the Jews of Germany, aware of the

unwholesome ideas a number of his brethren were imbued with, respecting the most important parts of Scripture, bent his mind on reforming their notions; and, for this salutary purpose, he translated some books of the Holy Volume, in a masterly style, and devoted ten years of his active life to a metrical translation of the Psalms, wherein he solved all difficulties hitherto met with, to the satisfaction of the zealous searcher. It is from that highly classical work, we shall extract the version of the 59th Psalm, that being the one of which the language has been considered as most virulent, and has been rendered, accordingly, by the authorized translation. We shall avail ourselves of the commentary of Joel Briel, and feel assured that our occupation will not prove altogether fruitless, but will certainly bring the tenor of this Psalm in strict accordance with the philanthropic sentiments pervading the whole of the book.

"To the chief musician, Al-tashith, a Michtam of David, when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him."

It is fully and clearly proved in that part of the Preface to the Translation of the Psalms by Mendelsohn, which treats on the nomenclature of the instruments mentioned at the heads of the Psalms, that the instruments which the Sacred Singer made choice of for the performance of his hymns were appropriate to the tenor of the subject which was to be sung. And the very instrument

intended to accompany the solemn strains of this Psalm (which describes the most painfully dangerous position David ever was in) denotes by its name the benevolent prayer of the Singer: *Al-tashchith*, "destroy not." He calls it, *Michtam* "gem, jewel," on account of the predeliction he had for this ode, which undoubtedly was composed under peculiar emotions of his soul.

"DEFEND me against mine enemies, O God :

Shelter me on high against those that rise against me!"

THE circumstances under which this lay was composed are related in 1 Samuel xix. King Saul, after having failed in his efforts by stratagem to slay David, who had only conferred benefits on him, having exposed his life for the glory of Saul in a war against the Philistines, finally showed himself his open enemy, and sent his satellites to surround the house, in order to seize and conduct David into his presence on the next morning, when he intended to inflict summary punishment on him with

his own hands. Unsuspecting as David was, it required all the anxious fears of his wife to open his eyes to the treachery of the king, and he reluctantly consented to seek his safety in flight. In this momentous crisis his powerful feelings found vent in an exclamation to the God of Israel, whom David beseeches to place him on an eminence, secure from the attacks of those that rise against him, however aspiring they may be.

"SAVE me from the workers of iniquity :
 Help me against the blood-thirsty ;
 For lo, they lie in ambush against my life,
 Crowding in upon me, the iniquitous !
 Though I sinned in nought, transgressed not,
 They run about, prepare their arms.
 Awake, then, come towards me, and see into it."

AFTER having implored the protection of God against the violence offered to him, he affirms his own innocence. It fills his soul with bitterness thus to see himself rewarded for the brilliant services he rendered his ungrateful king ;

Divine justice may in such moments almost be imagined to sleep, when ruthless cruelty, leagued with crafty guile, proudly walks abroad ; and thence his exclamation, "Awake ! see into it !"

"O ETERNAL God of the universe,
 Lord of Israel, on !
 Visit all the inhabitants of the earth :
 Spare none of the shameless,
 None of the faithless."

HERE David bursts forth in his most vehement charges against Saul. He calls upon the just God to search the hearts of all that dwell on the earth, and not to grant the triumph to wickedness, allied to the

basest ingratitude, such as Saul was guilty of towards the innocent David, whom he had no reason whatsoever to hate ; but, on the contrary, whom he ought to have cherished.

"THEY return at night
 Tumultuous, like dogs
 Roving through the city."

AFTER having been in search of their prey during the day, David represents them as returning to their places of rendezvous, at night, in order to concert fresh measures of destruction against him ; and, not

unlike the animals to which he compares them, they appear bent on hacking their teeth into him, should they even roam through the streets of the city all night in quest of him.

"THEY vent slander from their mouth,
 And hurl poniards from their lips.
 Who is to hear it ?
 But thou, O Lord, deridest them,
 And laughest at the haughty."

HERE we are made acquainted with a new circumstance of the indefatigable persecutions practised by Saul against David. When all the shafts of secret machinations had missed their aim, when privacy could no longer be of any avail, the appearance of justice is had recourse to ; public warfare denounced against the beloved of the people, who had led the valiant sons of Israel into battle, returned at their head triumphant, and laden

with spoil won from their most persevering foes, the Philistines, against whom war had been raging for centuries, during which success had not always smiled on the descendants of Jacob. The task of lowering him (in whom no guilt had been found) in the estimation of the people could only be accomplished by means of calumny ; and to this Saul accordingly resorted, when his more indirect attempts had failed. This is the

subject of the foregoing verses: Calumny is denounced by David to be like poniards, that being the weapon most fit for the execution of a black deed, as he who wields it may for a long time evade detection. For

“who,” say they, “sees it? who can, in our machinations, discern truth from fabrication?” But David knew Him who searches all secrets, and his trust is in Him.

“O ALMIGHTY Power! 't is thee I await.
The Lord is my tower of defence:
His salvation is near me.
God will grant me my desire upon mine enemies.”

THE fullest confidence in the all-guiding power of the Creator is expressed in the above words, which cause us to discard any ideas we might entertain, that fear for his own safety agitated David for a moment. His staunch adherence to the commands of the Deity was attended by its natural consequence, unlimited resignation to Him whose will was the only beacon he sought when tossed about on the ocean of adversity. His prayer was therefore

chiefly directed to the effect the visitation of God was to produce on those who had so grossly injured him. He wishes to obtain satisfaction at the hands of his persecutors; and if David had been guided only by such feelings as are common to all men, what would most likely have been the atonement he would have deemed sufficient to expiate their miscreant deeds against him? But let us proceed in the Psalm.

“LET them not perish,
Lest my people forget them:
In their wretchedness, keep them wandering:
O thou, our Shield, cause them in their humbled state
To denounce the sins of their speeches,
The haughty words of their lips;
And how, entangled by their pride,
They expiate fraud and perjury.”

THIS, then, is the high aim of David when he prays for satisfaction at the hands of his adversaries. They are not to be destroyed! Does he, perhaps, wish to reserve them for a time, when he will be better able to let loose on them the thunderbolts of private revenge? No! it is only in the all-involving interest of the general good, and for the propagation of practical virtue, by the fatal *dé-*

nouement which follows the intricate workings of cunning and ingratitude, that he exerts his soul in this incomparable invocation to the Deity! All the inhabitants of the world are to hear the sad tale, descriptive of the woes, inflicted by the wicked on themselves, from their own lips, that the spark of virtue may light up into a glorious flame, and the seed of evil be choked ere it spread.

“Do but destroy them in thy wrath! destroy them!
And they exist no more!
No, they must plainly feel
There is a God in Jacob:
The Lord of all the globe.”

FULLY convinced of the beneficial result the preservation of his antagonists would have on the minds of the

public, the benevolent mind of David does not rest here. It is the welfare of his bitterest enemies he contem-

plates,—their true moral welfare! He wishes that they may return, by their temporary sufferings, to that rock upon which he seeks shelter, undaunted by whatever of danger may seek to affright his soul. But this happy change could never be effected, if their memory were razed from the earth! Hence his sincere and moving prayer: "If my Lord destroy them they exist no more; and what benefit can their immortal souls derive from the extirpation of their frail bodies? Therefore let them live,

O God of my fathers, that they may be for ever after impressed with the grandeur of thy name, and that they may join with thy pious children in the praise of thy glory, when they will be compelled to acknowledge that Thou art the God of Jacob and of all the universe; that thy unerring commands are to be strictly executed, and not those of a mortal king; whom they aid and abet in doing that which is ungracious in thy sight." *

"AT eve they will then approach,
Howling like dogs,
Roving through the city,
Wandering about for food
To appease their hunger,
To find a place of repose for the night."

THEIR punishment is commensurate to the crime by which it is caused, and is described in nearly the same words, with the difference, that the verses explanatory of the crime bear the character of shameless triumph, exulting in successful

villany: Whereas the same incidents in the passage before us represent to our mind the abject despondency of criminals, and the dreary fall from the towering heights of aspiring ambition to the lowly cares of bodily sustenance.

"WHILST I, even I, glorify thy power,
Exult in thy bounty even until morn:
That thou wert a tower of defence to me,
A refuge in the hour of need.
Thou art, Omnipotent, the theme of my song;
A strong tower is God to me,
Bountiful is the Lord to me."

WHAT a sublime transition from the wailings of the wretched sinner to the heart-expanding joy of the pious, though persecuted, man of God! Like the workers of evil, he, too, watches all night; but how different their occupations from his! and in the same degree as the punishment of those who sought to

imbrue their hands in his blood is adequate to, and commensurate with, their malevolent intentions, just as consistent is the placid triumph of David over the intrigues and violence of his foes, with his resignation to the will of God at the moment of imminent peril.

M. H. B.

* In the English authorized version there is a plain contradiction in the translation:—"Slay them not, lest my people be consumed, scatter them by thy power, and bring them down, O Lord our God." (Verse 11.) "*Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be,*"

&c. (Verse 13.) "Slay them not," and "Consume them in wrath," cannot be reconciled. But the word *לֹא* is not, as the English version takes it, in the *imperative* mood, but the *infinitive* mood, both being the same in Hebrew.—THE TRANSLATOR.

V. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 203.)

CONTEMPORARY with R. Isaac ben Baruch, were his three name-sakes, R. Isaac ben Geath, R. Isaac bar Moses ben Sakhne, and R. Isaac ben Reuben Al-Barcelonita. The first, R. Isaac ben Geath, was a friend and disciple of the great R. Samuel *Hannagid*, and his son, R. Joseph; was celebrated for his Rabbinical and profane learning; and enjoyed great fame as a poet. He was a man of great wealth, and resided at Lucena, where his high character obtained for him unbounded influence over his brethren. When the fatal catastrophe befel R. Joseph, which broke up the schools at Grenada, R. Azariah, the son of R. Joseph, escaped, and sought a refuge with R. Isaac at Lucena. Mindful of the friendship with which the great R. Samuel Levi *Hannagid* had favoured him, R. Isaac exerted all his influence to place the grandson of his friend in an honourable and lucrative office. Accordingly he was on the point of getting R. Azariah appointed to fill the office of Chief Rabbi, or head of the congregation at Lucena; when the youthful fugitive, exhausted by grief at the many and fatal reverses of fortune which had befallen his house, suddenly sickened and died. In consequence of his death, R. Isaac ben Geath was obliged to assume the vacant office, which he held during fifteen years. Under his superintendence the school at Lucena became famed, and held a distinguished rank among the Jewish seats of learning of that day. In the year 1091, the learned Rabbi was taken ill, and removed for change of air to Cordova, where he shortly afterwards died.

The second, R. Isaac ben Sakhne, greatly celebrated for his Talmudical learning, did not stand in any connexion with the Grenadine school

of R. Samuel *Hannagid*; but had in his infant years frequented the lectures of R. Henoch, the son of R. Moses, the Babylonian. He was consequently a rigid adherent of the old or Talmudic system, which excluded profane studies. Having been appointed chief of the congregation at Denia, on the coast of the Mediterranean, he held that office for several years. But, dissatisfied with the progress which the mundane system of the Grenadians made in the estimation of his pupils, he resigned his office and departed for the east, with the intention of reopening the Talmudical schools on the Euphrates, which had been closed since the death of Hiskiah *Resh-gelutha*, in the year 1036. In this attempt, however, he was not successful; and he died, disappointed in his expectations, about the year 1060.

After his departure from Denia, the congregation there appointed the third, R. Isaac Al-Barcelonita, to fill the vacant office. This great teacher was, as his name indicates, a native of Barcelona, and one of the most distinguished pupils of the Grenadine school. His knowledge was alike extensive and varied; and he is celebrated, not only for the purity and elegance of his Hebrew and Arabic poems, but likewise for his Notes on the Talmud. The rich congregation of Denia, freed from the yoke which the rigid system of their former teacher had imposed, admired the liberality of sentiment and great attainments of their new Rabbi. He married a daughter of the rich and influential family of *Alkhush*, and by that means added greatly to his power and authority; of which, however, he made the most worthy use until his death, which happened in the year 1089.

(To be continued.)

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I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ז לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 228.)

BELOVED are Israel, to whom was given a delectable instrument: But that love was surpassing which made it known that to them had been given the delectable instrument wherewith the world was created: As it is said, "For I give you good doctrine, therefore forsake ye not my law." (III. 20.)

COMMENTARY. *Beloved are Israel, for to them was given a delectable instrument*—The present maxim closes a series of apophthegms, in which our teacher has explained to us the great love which the Creator has graciously extended to mankind. This explanation the sage *tanai* divides into three parts, conveyed in continuous maxims, each of which acquaints us with a higher degree of the Divine love; and of these degrees the present maxim forms the climax. The first of these maxims acquaints us with the great and universal truth, that all men are alike created in the image of God, partaking of the same glorious and important prerogative—that of being gifted with an immortal soul—and that, being brethren in, and co-heirs of, the love and grace which the Most High has bestowed on their race, all men are in duty bound to love each other: And in order to show them that this duty is imperative on them, and must in its effects and operations be extended to every one who lays claim to the appellation "man," our teacher enters into a practical illustration of the Divine commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself," the true sense of which he explains to us, and shows us that it is fully in our own power to yield obedience to this commandment, according to its real intent and meaning. In his second maxim

he proceeds to tell us that the Divine love, which is extended alike to all the sons of men, has not abandoned them, or left them utterly destitute of the knowledge necessary for securing their temporal and eternal happiness; that, having revealed himself to the progenitor of their race, He made known to him that obedience to the commandments of his Creator,—not a slavish or servile submissiveness, but obedience freely yielded by his reason and gratitude, and flowing from his own uncontrolled will,—was the great means of insuring felicity to himself and his descendants the human race. As is well known, the admonition was disregarded, and man through sin formed the baleful acquaintance with evil and misfortune which has ever since been the portion of his descendants, and from which they can only become freed by a return to that pure obedience which was required of their progenitor. And in order to place within their reach a full knowledge of the obedience required at their hands, and also an example which should show them in the most striking and forcible manner, the effects of conforming to the Divine will, or transgressing the commandments which the Lord of the universe lays down for the guidance of his rational terrestrial creatures;—in order to place this knowledge and example

before the eyes of the whole human race, He made choice of the progeny of one pious man, Abraham, whose faith and obedience had stood the test of repeated and severe trials. With this man he entered into a covenant, that he and his descendants in one particular line should be consecrated to the Lord, and devoted to his service only, while He would be their God and Protector; a covenant which, on a subsequent occasion, after He had delivered the descendants of Abraham, the Israelites, from Egyptian bondage, He vouchsafed to renew with them. But as the claims of that covenant were conditional, and liable to be broken and rendered void by the disobedience of the Israelites, the Deity graciously deigned to declare them his "children," and thereby to establish a relation which no circumstances can alter, and a bond of affinity which no misconduct on their part can sever. And as thus the people He deigned to adopt were placed in a fixed situation, relative to Him, (blessed be HE!) as well as to the human race in general, and a certain purpose was assigned to them, which either with their own free will and in prosperity, or against their inclination and in adversity, they must be instrumental in accomplishing: As, moreover, the accomplishment of this purpose,—while it tends to secure their own felicity both temporal and eternal in the highest degree which man, in his mortal state, and the immortal spirit by which he is animated, in its purer sphere, is capable of attaining,—will likewise place that felicity within the reach of the whole human race, who are to be brought back to that free, and rational, and sincere obedience which was required at the hands of their first ancestor, and to that happiness which once was his portion: The selection of the Israelites, their adoption as "children of the Lord their God," and the reason why they were so adopted, and which was proclaimed to them and to all mankind, (which forms the subject of our teacher's second maxim,) are proofs of the Divine love, even surpassing that which the Deity evinced in creating man "in

the image of God;" for, while He thus endowed them with an immortal soul, and constituted them to be rational, free, and, therefore, responsible agents, He also showed them where that knowledge was to be obtained, by means of which they could secure the everlasting happiness of the imperishable spirit, by which they are animated.

Thus we see that the second maxim of our teacher acquaints us with a degree of the Divine love towards His rational terrestrial creatures, excelling that which he had introduced to us in his first maxim. The climax and fulness of Divine love is, however, placed before us in the maxim which is more particularly the subject of our present investigation and commentary. For the second maxim told us only where the knowledge necessary for our temporal and eternal happiness was to be found, and who were the people appointed to be the depositories of that knowledge, and the guardians selected by the Divine wisdom to hold that knowledge in trust for their brethren, all the sons of Adam, without distinction of race or colour; to whom they are to dispense that knowledge, either by emulation through their obedience and prosperity, or by their fearful example through their disobedience and adversity. But the third great maxim of our teacher tells us in what that knowledge consists, and the authentic record which acquaints man with the revealed will of his Creator. He, therefore, tells us, "Beloved are Israel, to whom was given a delectable instrument;" the greatest proof of His love which the Creator of the universe could give you, whom he has called and adopted to be his children is, that he intrusted to you the delectable instrument, which is to promote perfect happiness among the sons of man: And that, having called you "His children," and His "first-born sons," He gave to you, as a sacred deposit, a full knowledge of His will, of His laws, statutes, and commandments, which you are to observe in their minutest details and particulars. For by such observance you will not only promote and secure

your own temporal and eternal happiness, but also, by your example, contribute to accomplish the great and beneficent purpose for which you were selected from amongst all the nations of the earth, namely, to render them partakers with you of the Divine grace and mercy.

This knowledge our teacher calls, בלי חסד, "delectable (or precious) instrument," and truly does it deserve that name, both if we regard it in relation to the great and glorious Giver, and to those on whom His bounty is bestowed.

With respect to the Giver, we know that in Him (blessed be His holy name!) is centred every possible perfection in its highest degree;—that as He is the great First Cause of all that exists, His benign providence, while it extends its superintendence to the most remote of the celestial luminaries, that dispense light to beings fit by their conformation to enjoy the genial influence; does likewise take cognizance of the humblest of those rational creatures whom He has ordained to inhabit the terrestrial globe;—that as He is the Author of every good, in whom dwells the fulness of mercy, grace, and beneficence, it is, and must be, His wish, that all His creatures should enjoy the greatest possible portion of good or happiness, of which, according to their nature, they are respectively capable;—and that His rational, terrestrial creatures, having been gifted by Him with a spirit of imperishable vitality, an immortal soul, which survives the earthly tenement in which, for a transient period, it resides, should enjoy a two-fold kind of felicity, 1. Temporal, or earthly, adapted to the combined capacities of soul and body, of which mortal man is composed; and, 2. Eternal, or heavenly, adapted to the essence of the soul after its separation from its material envelope: And as it is certain that the aim and purpose, why man is created and made to undergo the various vicissitudes of his mortal career, is that he may thereby the better prepare himself for the bliss of a future state, which knoweth no end, we ask, "What gift more precious in His own estimation, can

even the inexhaustible bounty of the omnipotent and merciful God bestow on his rational creatures than, the full and unerring knowledge of those means which ensure to them the highest state of prosperity, both here and hereafter?"

And if we consider the relation which this gift bears to the Israelites, and through them to the whole human race, we shall find that it is indeed the most precious boon which the Divine wisdom, power, and goodness could confer on them. Man is, as we have already stated, a composite being. Offspring of the earth, his material conformation assimilates him to the beasts of the field. He shares their appetites, is exposed to the same and more numerous wants, and subject to the same and more numerous accidents, than other animals: For as they are not gifted by the Deity with a principle of imperishable vitality, they are under the protection of an unerring instinct, which guides them safely throughout their transient state of existence. But such is not the case with man: For his earthly and material conformation is animated by a celestial and immortal spirit, which is endowed with all the noblest qualities of intellect. His aspirations are, therefore, unbounded, like the source whence his soul emanates. Truth, knowledge, and a thirst for perfection, are essential to the very being of this celestial principle: But its purity is stained, its clearness becomes offuscated, by its connexion with a material body. The indefatigable research and restless activity of the soul are stimulated or impeded by the desires and appetites which man possesses in common with the brute, but which in him are not restrained by the force of instinct. To bridle these desires is the peculiar province of reason, one of the principal attributes of the celestial spirit within him. But such is the influence of the material body on its more subtle inmate, that reason, left to its own resources, is but too often overpowered by the violence of animal appetites, desires, and passions. Add to this, that while man is left entirely free and unfettered in his choice, and

may, as he thinks proper, yield himself to the domination of his unruly desires, or be guided by the voice of reason, he is, at the same time, responsible for all his actions: The watchful eye of Providence takes cognizance of his most secret deeds; and, according to the conduct he pursues during the short-lived con-

nexion between the mortal and immortal parts, the earthly and the celestial principles, which combine to form him, he becomes the author or destroyer of one or both of the two-fold kinds of felicity, which, as we stated before, the Deity intends his rational and terrestrial creatures to enjoy.

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 232.)

CHAPTER XVI.

THE next subject which claims attention in our present inquiry is one, the importance of which will at once be felt when we state it to be—prayers, or the orisons addressed by man to his Creator: For though prayer forms no part of the principle of Divine laws, still it is a branch which shoots forth from the superintendence of Providence; in as much as the granting of prayers is a convincing and incontrovertible proof of the cognizance which Providence takes of individuals, and of their actions. It is therefore an indispensable article of faith with every believer in the Divine laws, that prayers are efficacious and availing, and can save him from evil. For he who does not pray in the hour of distress, either does not believe in Providence, or doubts the power of the Lord to save him: And in the one case, as in the other, he is an unbeliever. The man who believes in Providence, and who does not call in question the omnipotence of the Deity, and that He (blessed be HE!) can save in every danger, but who doubts his own worthiness, and fears he does not deserve that his prayers should be heard; that man is in a proper state of mind, inasmuch as it does not become us to be over-righteous in our own conceit. But, though this humility and doubt of his own deserts is the frame of mind in which man ought to approach his Maker, still that doubt must not prevent him from praying; for were

he to abstain from offering his orisons to God, in consequence of the sense he entertains of his own unworthiness, it must be because he believes that whatever of good befalls man must be the reward of his previous good deeds, and is not the free gift of the Divine bounty. But such an opinion is altogether erroneous; for Holy Writ expressly declares, "For we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercy." (Daniel ix. 18.) For the mercy which the Lord extends to all his creatures, and the many gifts His infinite goodness bestows on them, spring from His own free bounty; but are not, by any means, rewards which the sons of men have a right to exact at His hands in consequence of their good and virtuous conduct: As the Lord declared to Job, "Who has been beforehand with me, that I should repay him?" (Job xli. 11.) The meaning is: Has any one the power or means to be beforehand with me, that, by conferring on me any favour or obligation, he should establish such a claim as to have a right to demand payment of me? It is, therefore, a received and indispensable article of faith that, whatever felicity or good we enjoy, flows from the perfect mercy and free benevolence of the Deity; but are not rewards which the good conduct of man gives him a right to claim and expect; that, consequently, He bestows His gifts and dispenses His bounty, although the recipient can have no merit which confers a right upon him.

Therefore, in praying to the Lord, who created all by His power, and supports all in his mercy, we address the only Being who can and will hear our prayers, if they be such as His providence deems it for our true good to grant: Nor is there any other power, either in nature, or in the supernatural (angelic) creation, which can grant the prayers of man, as every other power, of whatsoever kind or description it may be, is circumscribed within the limits which the Creator, in His wisdom, thought proper to assign to its influence and activity. Want of acquaintance with this fact,—that the angelic powers are but the subordinate agents of the Creator, who has confined each of them to a certain sphere of action and influence, which, without His command, they cannot outstep,—is the gross error which misleads the Sabeans worshippers of the heavenly hosts, who, fancying they have observed the influence which the various planets respectively exercise on the fate of man, endeavour, by prayers, by incense, sacrifice, and other rites of Divine worship, to render these stars propitious, or to avert their baneful influence. But they forgot, or did not know, that each one of the heavenly bodies must, without any will of its own, move in that orbit, and exercise that influence, which the Divine will has prescribed; that it has no choice or volition of its own, but that they are humble instruments of Him who called them into existence: The splendid luminaries which adorn the empyrean, as well as the mightiest of angels that stand before the Lord, have but one impulse and one motive of action, namely, obedience to His will. Therefore, it is as impossible for any created agent, or being, to act contrary to its essential nature, as it is for the fire to abstain from scorching the garment of the righteous, if he incautiously exposes it to the heat of the flame; or to consume the garment of the wicked, provided he keeps at a prudent distance from the point of culmination. As the fire in the one case is a passive, and in the second an impotent, agent, compelled to harm the

righteous man, that comes within the limit of operations assigned to it by the nature of its essence, and unable to punish the evil-doer, who does not come within these limits, so are all the celestial and angelic powers; as they can only act according to the nature of their essence, or not at all. Thus these powers ought not to be prayed to, as they are not free or independent agents: Whereas the Holy One (blessed be He!) is the only free and unlimited power, who acts according to His own will; and grants or withholds according to His sovereign pleasure. His grace can grant and reconcile gifts which are contrary in their nature. His mercy bestows freely on all created nature, whether the objects of His bounty be worthy in consequence of previous good deeds, or have no other claim on His goodness than sincere and fervent prayer. This is a fact proved by repeated passages of Scripture, but particularly by Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, King of Judah, who was wicked to that degree, that no one before or after him has surpassed his evil deeds: Yet, when misfortunes befel him, of which he himself was the sole author, we read, “And when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him; and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom.” (2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13.) His example teaches us two most important truths: The first is that, although a man have reached the acmé of wickedness, and be as thoroughly bad as Manasseh was, and prays with sincerity and a contrite heart, the Divine mercy will not turn away from him: The second is, that though he does not pray until the extreme of evil or misfortune weighs him down to the earth, still his prayer will be heard; for such is the infinite mercy and goodness of the Lord, that he does not, as men are apt to do, preface His refusal with the remark, “Now ye come to me because ye are in distress; but while ye were prosperous ye never thought of me.” His grace is end-

less, his bounty unlimited, like his power; and His right hand is ever stretched forth to receive the penitent: As the Psalmist declares, "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses." (Psalm cvii. 6.) The prophet likewise exclaims, "I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me." (Jonah ii. 2.) His meaning is, Although I have richly deserved the affliction I am visited with, because I have rebelled against thy will, and attempted to fly from thy command: As, therefore, my present calamity is a punishment due to my sins, and my prayers ought, therefore, in justice, to remain unheard, still my confidence in the Divine mercy, and my knowledge of the Divine goodness, are such, that, in the extremity of distress which I have brought upon myself, I pray, in the fullest assurance that my prayer will be heard, and therefore he says, "And he heard me," and again, "Thou heardest my voice," as if the relief he prays for had already been granted to him.

CHAPTER XVII.

MERCY emanates and springs from the Lord alone, nor is there any other being whatsoever which can dispense true, and perfect, and absolute mercy save and except the Deity; for it is impossible that true, perfect, and absolute mercy should be dispensed by any being unless that being combines within itself the following four essential qualifications:—

1. The first qualification is, that the dispenser must be immutable; for if he is subject to change, his mercy cannot be absolute, inasmuch as it is liable to change with him. And the only Being which is immutable is the Lord, as we have fully proved * in the third chapter of our second division. 2. The second qualification is, that the dispenser must be altogether independent of external aid; for were he to stand in need of such aid, his mercy would no longer be absolute, as it would

depend on his ability to obtain that assistance without which he cannot act. And as all created beings are in the most intimate degree of connexion to, and dependence on, each other, and are, moreover, subject to their Creator, it follows that there is but one Being who is altogether above external aid or assistance: As the Sacred Scriptures declare, "I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself." (Isaiah xlv. 24.) 3. The third qualification is, that the dispenser must be able to grant gifts and favours of contrary natures; as, otherwise, the recipient cannot at all times implore the aid which he needs: For, man's wants vary, and he who wishes to build to-day may want to demolish to-morrow; he who needs sunshine at one time of the year, requires rain at another. But as every created agent is circumscribed in its powers, and limited in its influence, so that it must confine itself to that precise activity which results from its natural essence, it follows that the only Being who is altogether unlimited, is the great First Cause, from whom all things spring: As Holy Writ declares, "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." (Isaiah xlv. 7.) 4. The fourth qualification is, that the dispenser must be superior to all external control, so that no other being in existence has the power to impede or prevent his resolves; for were he subject to control, or influence of any kind, his mercy would no longer be absolute, inasmuch as it would depend on the consent of another, which may either be granted or withheld. And as it is a fact, too well known and established, that all created beings are subject to the control of their Creator, it follows that the only Being who is altogether above control of any kind, is the omnipotent Lord of All; as the Sacred Scriptures tell us: "If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, who can hinder him?" (Job xi. 10.)

When these four essential qualifications combine in the dispenser, the recipients who implore his aid may

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. i., pp. 87 et seq.

be assured that his mercy is true, perfect, and absolute, and that, therefore, he both can and will grant their prayers. And as there is no being whatsoever in existence who is possessed of these four indispensable attributes, save and except the Lord alone, the necessary consequence is, that there is no other power or influence whatsoever whose aid ought to be invoked, or to whom prayers ought to be, or can be, addressed with the certainty of aid and relief. These reflections will explain to us the meaning of the passage in the Song of Moses beginning with the words, "See, now, that I, even I, am He, &c." (Deut. xxxii. 39.) The nations who have driven Israel into captivity fancy that the God of Jacob has not the power to aid and deliver his people; they therefore ask in derision, "Where are their Gods, the rock in whom they trusted, which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offerings? let them rise up and help you, and be your protection." (Deut. xxxii. 37, 38.) These words prove that the idolatrous nations rank the God of Israel on a par with the other celestial or angelic influences; namely, that he is subject to change, or stands in need of external aid; or that his power does not extend to all things, and cannot alike influence antagonist principles; or that he is subject to control or resistance from some independent power, which thwarts his purposes. To refute such mistaken notions, Holy Writ commences by declaring, "See, now, that I, even I, am he:" I am immutably and unalterably the same; to me there is neither past nor future, but I AM at all times the same. There is no other being in existence which can use the expression, "I, even I, am;" for all created beings are constantly undergoing alteration; they are not to-day precisely the same as yesterday, and will not be to-morrow exactly what they are to-day; for, having been created, and had a beginning in time, they keep pace with its progress, and are subject to the alternations of past, present, and future. Therefore the prophet properly asks, "To whom will you liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the

Holy One;" (Isaiah xl. 25;) and then continues, "I, even I, am the Lord;" I am the same to-day as I was yesterday, and will be to-morrow; "and, beside me, there is no Saviour:" (Isaiah lxiii. 11:)—As I alone am immutable, there is no one beside me who can save or assist you, and therefore your prayers must be addressed to me only. Having thus established the first of the four attributes which we have enumerated, Moses continues, "There is no God with me:" (Deut. xxxii. 39:)—There is no other being whatsoever whose aid I stand in need of, or who could offer me any assistance; for, as whatever exists is created by me, and derives whatever of power it is endowed with from me, the being who could be in a condition to offer or afford me its aid, must be possessed of inherent, absolute, and unconditional power; or, in other words, must be God like myself; but "there is no God with me," and therefore I am above the necessity of requiring or obtaining aid. This proves the second attribute. Holy Writ proceeds to state, "I kill and make alive; I wound and I heal:" (Deut. xxxii. 39:)—I can command antagonist principles,—life or death, health or illness, and every other power of nature, however opposed they may be in their operations, and contrary in their effects, are all alike influenced by me, and submissive to my will. This declaration points out the third attribute; and the Sacred Scriptures wind it up by saying, "Neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand:" (Deut. xxxii. 39:)—There is no one whose power can withstand or thwart my purpose; I am superior to all control, but exercise my unlimited sway over all that exists; which fully establishes the fourth of the attributes which we mentioned. And as thus there is no other being whatsoever in whom these four attributes can, by any possibility, be combined, the Psalmist justly observes, "Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy." (Psalm cxxx. 7.) As whatever thou prayest for and hopest to obtain cannot be claimed by thee as thy due, but must be bestowed on thee

as the free gift of the Divine Mercy, all thy hopes must be centred in the Lord, for He alone is the Sacred Source from whom floweth the fullness of mercy and grace ; therefore

address thy prayers to Him only ; for it is useless that man should address his supplications to beings who have not the power to grant his request.

(*To be continued.*)

III. COMMENTARIES ON HOLY WRIT.

(*Continued from page 239.*)

THE FORTY-NINTH PSALM.

THE importance of the subject contained in Psalm xlix. a version of which, after Mendelsohn, I take the liberty of submitting to the readers of your useful periodical, has induced me to select it from the Holy Book, and will at the same time afford me a fit apology for having relinquished the textual order of the Psalms. My intention being only to extract from, but not to translate, the work of Mendelsohn. I have selected Psalms, the beauty of which may be generally appreciated, while, in their explanation, my weak efforts do not meet with insurmountable difficulties. I trust that the Psalm before us will be found to belong to that class, and that the accomplishment of my task may justify the attempt.

M. H. B.

MUCH has been disputed as to who were the authors of the Psalms. The generally-received opinion, however,—that supported by Talmudic authority,—is, that David composed the greatest part of them himself, and also made a collection from poems, handed down to him by the voice of tradition, or emanating from the pens of some of his contemporaries ; for thus it is expressed in the Talmud, (treatise *Baba Bathra*, fol. 13,) “ David wrote the Psalms by the aid of ten sages, namely, Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Jeduthun, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah.” We reserve to ourselves a more full discussion of this subject for a future time, but will briefly remark that, besides the forty-ninth psalm, there are ten others superscribed “ to the sons of Korah,” descendants of Kehath, son of Levi. Although it cannot be made out to a certainty, to whom we are indebted for these poems ; still there is no

doubt of their belonging to different epochs ; nay, they evidently bear the stamps of subsequent generations, and we are borne out in our conjecture that the race of the sons of Korah (the most distinguished of the house of Kehath from their being repeatedly singled out from the rest) has been productive of men endowed with poetic genius through a long series of years, even down to the days of Hezekiah, King of Judah.

Among nations widely separated by space, time, customs, and language, the question analyzed in this psalm has been mooted. Solutions, as unsatisfactory as they were contradictory, were given, and divided mankind into schools, and their morality into systems ; obstacles, more shrewdly found than removed, ushered scepticism into the world ; and not unfrequently apathy, with all her deadening effects on reason and moral worth, was the sequel to the feverish excitement caused in the mind of the waverer, by the many opinions militating against one another. The question why this life in so many instances offers its sweets to the unjust, and crowns the wicked with laurels,—whilst misery and neglect are the share of the man who disdains the shining advantages of worldly grandeur when they are to be purchased at the expense of conscience and real honour,—has been agitated in all its gravity by the author of the inspired lay before us : All the pomp of mundane glory is here displayed, all the luxuriant attendants on wealth are enumerated without any extenuation ; that the pious may at once discern the utmost limits of this pseudo-happiness, and the possessor of these vulgar desiderata know, how far he

may stretch his wishes. But with the same even-handed, poetical and didactic justice, the horrors of utter destruction are depicted in vivid colours to those who, insensate, grasp after the shadow of earthly treasure, renouncing God and the inexhaustible enjoyments of a life to come. The second part of the question,—whether the life of the man who is virtuous, but needy and afflicted with earthly cares and sufferings, is really to be considered as standing in frightening contrast with the gorgeous sensualities of the

wicked, who is in possession of worldly gifts, — has been handled with the same tranquillizing ability in the interest of the lovers of virtue. An attentive consideration of this psalm, indicating the highest enthusiasm of a real believer, must impress us all with the idea delivered on the same by the very learned and celebrated Rabin Abn Esra in his laconical and profound style: “This psalm deserves to be revered, for it is the reflection of the empyrean light, and of the immortality of sublime wisdom.”

To the Chief Musician, a psalm of the sons of Korah.

“LISTEN to me, ye nations all
That dwell on earth, O be attentive !
Sons of men, sons of the great,
Ye rich and ye needy all !”

As the subject of the lesson imparted to us in this ode bears on the futility of earthly possessions, the call made on men in the foregoing verses only notices their relations with the things of this nether world. The acclamation is general, includes every being gifted with reason implanted into his mind by the Creator for purposes of the highest importance, to which our corporeal faculties are only, as it were, a channel. “Sons of men” stand in contrast with “sons of the great;” although for either word, אִישׁ, אָדָם,

the English word “man,” must serve as a translation. Man is called אָדָם, in consideration of his material parts, which are all belonging to “the earth,” אֲדָמָה, towards which, and the things thereto appertaining, they have a never-ceasing tendency. אִישׁ on the other hand, from יֵשׁ whence יֵשִׁית “ens,” points out the true essence of any thing in existence, is indiscriminately applied to all members of the universe, and even found to represent the idea of the great Author of all creation.

“My lips shall teach you high wisdom,
And my heart indulge in sage contemplation.
My ear hears a lofty strain,
And on the harp I disclose it to you.”

THE enraptured mind of the inspired Harper receives its instructions from on high, and faithfully delivers its trust to the understanding of mortals, to whom he discloses the mysterious ways of Providence in lofty and soul-stirring poesy; hence his assertion, that they shall hear the words of wisdom, which have flown to him from the pure Source of all knowledge. The very proofs of his sentence convinces his hearers that he is the interpreter of words dictated to him by a higher

authority. Thoughts, properly original and our own, are the immediate cause of the words in which they are embodied, and therefore precede utterance; the reverse is the case in an expression emanating from a source not in our own mind. Here the words will be the cause; and the scrutinizing thought, leading to the perfect perception of their meaning, the ensuing consequence. We now arrive at the body of the psalm, of which the foregoing is only the prefatory announcement.

“WHY should I be damned in the time of ill?
Can the punishment due to my oppressors light on me?
They who trust in their great might,
And pride themselves on their vast riches?”

THE evils, as well as the joys, of this world being so transitory, the pious man may indeed interrogatively exclaim, why should he be daunted in the time of affliction? The retributive justice awarded by the Eternal Judge to the hard-hearted oppressor would indeed be a fit subject of grief; for it is everlasting, it is certain, and the end

thereof is unknown to mortals. The duration of direst affliction, incidental on the son of care, may be computed with approximate accuracy by the frail sufferer; for what is the span of time, comprising even the whole of our mortal career, in comparison with eternity, the bare idea of which is beyond our conception?

“THE brother will not release his own brother,
But refuses his ransom to the judges;
Yea, to redeem himself, should it cost him much,
He ne'er would do it.”

So baneful is the influence exercised by the love of mammon on its votaries, that they would, without a scruple, turn from their fellows whom they might restore to happiness and liberty by the sacrifice of a part of their wealth; but no, rather than relinquish their often ill-got lucre, they would, in their own person, forego the noblest prerogative of man, liberty. Even at the present day,—centuries since these flaming truths were first sent forth to illumine the world,—we may find originals to the above description. The friend of mankind, the man who nourishes in his bosom the light of religion, must animadvert with bit-

terness on those benighted beings, in the guise of men, who place wealth, and the playthings of a moment, on those altars which ought to be kept pure for the worship of divine virtue. Ignorance has introduced into the world the desire for barbarous pomp and luxury; ignorance and fraud have fostered the predilection for things at which we may arrive by a thousand immoral ways, and with which we may dispense without deteriorating in the least from our real worth. What ignorance has built for our ruin, may knowledge demolish for our blessing!

“AND did the fool but live for ever,
Did he never find his end?
But sees he not even the wise must die,
That the host of fools must vanish,
And unto others leave their night?”

It would indeed somewhat redeem the folly of cherishing things of so imaginary a value, if the possessor could hope to retain them for ever. But his absurdity is magnified to the highest pitch of madness by the fact, that he must be aware of his fast-approaching end, pronounced by that decree from which there is no appeal, and in the execution of which no respect is shown to any difference of individuals, however acknowledged such difference might have been by him and his equals,

when in the full enjoyment of their transient splendour. Even the real difference existing between the moral grades of mankind is disregarded by the Deity in this general sentence against all men; the good as well as the bad must leave the scene of their earthly actions; and we bow in reverential obedience to the will of Him who has thus ordained it for our welfare. The impartiality shown to all men takes from the fool the possibility of deeming himself secure from death,

by imagining himself a wise and virtuous man, since no better fate is reserved for the good: Nor can he boastingly doubt of the difference between the suffering sage and himself, teeming with enjoyment, when the idea of his dissolution raises its warning finger to stop his vauntings. Although both the sage and the fool are destined to leave this earth, there is still a difference in the expression which the psalmist applies to their decease: "The wise men יִמְּוֹתוּ, 'die;' but the sons of Belial יִאֲבִדוּ, 'perish utterly;'"—a beautiful antithesis, according to which, the just only experience the change natural to an organized body;

whereas punishment is denounced in the perishing of the wicked. The חֵיל, "might," here attributed to the sensualist, and which he is compelled to leave behind him, is no part inherent in himself, and forming an essential part of his existence; neither strength of soul nor of body constitute its essence; it is the power of the rich displayed in their external appendages, their numerous adulators, their slaves, their houses, and that false honour shown to men of influence, by the common herd. And who can doubt but all those vanities are left behind, and utterly useless in a future state?

"THOUGH inwardly they think their palaces firm,
Their residences last for ever,
As their fame, wide spread through the land."

THE mad ambition of acquiring a high name in after-days by means of unequalled splendours, and other exertions not in strict unison with, or dependent on, a life of morality, are, by our moral instructor, comprised in the follies of the wicked. Such a thought as that expressed in the above verse is often a stimulus for the bad to adhere to their evil

practices, and to act as if they were sure of immortality on earth, where we know the expectation to be vain; and as if they denied an immortal state beyond the grave, where, according to all the vouchers we can require, it does exist. These endeavours to obtain equivocal fame are reprov'd, and demonstrated to be nugatory, by the following strophe:—

"BUT all the glories of man
Scarcely last one single night,
When he drops to the ground like the beasts."

THUS fall glory, honour, and fame, when the sun of life sets, and no trace is left in the place where the mighty but lately made himself the dread of a whole generation, except, perhaps, a pardonable joy at his removal. Thus the master-piece of creation, gifted with the requisite faculties to confer lasting benefits upon his brethren, loses all hopes of honourable surviving himself in the memory

of posterity, if he is unmindful of his moral duties. Like the brute, he works only for the satisfaction of his base and immediate appetites, amongst which, without any fear of contradiction, love of worldly glory may be placed; and he understands not how to employ his time, when living here, to acquire posthumous honours.

"SUCH are their works,—fools to themselves.
Ah, would posterity but burn them incense!
They sink into the grave like the bleating herd."

ON themselves recoils the harm to their passions. When they leave engendered by their vile pandering this life, after having striven to

establish a monument unto themselves, they find they are deceived: For posterity is just; and history penetrates with an eagle's eye into the recesses of the heart. If she discover but the slightest attempt at selfishness in the actions of the man, who by splendid doings wishes to bribe her powerful voice, she razes

his name from her lists of honourable mention, and transfers it to those on which are engraved names, the execration of mankind. Thus their most sanguine wishes are disappointed, while the stern countenance of the Judge, whose authority they had set at nought, awaits them in their last and eternal abode.

“DEATH hurries them away,—the righteous are above them
At dawn of yon morning. Not for ever can
The grave retain those that outlive it.”

This verse, the subject of polemical scrutiny to numerous commentators, has undoubtedly been illustrated with the greatest perspicuity by the philosopher whom we have taken for our guide. The translation recognised by authority has the latter end of the verse thus, “And their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling,” but the version by Mendelsohn is not only in nicest congruity with the spirit of the holy tongue, but throws, at the same time, considerable light on the immediately-preceding part of the passage, where the immortality of the soul is declared in the assurance, that on yon morning the just shall be victorious; (that morning in the celestial regions hinted at by the elliptical emphatic ה, in

לְבֹקֶר, “on that morning,” instead of which the text has ל, with -, and dagesh in the following letter;) and proved by the impossibility, that the Divine essence of the soul could be retained by the grave: No, the soul outlives it, and finds not its everlasting dwelling in the bowels of the earth. The ם affixed to וּבֵל, “dwelling,” is the ם negative, and greatly corroborates the lucid opinion of the learned Rabbi we quoted. Since the grave, therefore, is incapable of being the permanent receptacle of an essence sure to survive it, the approach of that promised morning, which will be the harbinger of triumph to the pious, is rendered certain.

“MAY the Lord but redeem my soul,
When he reclaims it, from the pains of hell
My soul sees them, without envy, hoard up treasures,
And how they magnify the splendour of their houses.”

BEHIND us lies the phantasm, called “worldly happiness.” Let us now turn our eyes towards the wishes that swell the bosom of the pious. We find him engaged in fervent prayer to God: Not that he averts from his devoted head any afflictions imposed on him by that hand which best knows when to wound and when to heal. His prayers are directed to one point only—a main point, indeed, and one that outweighs all other possible advantages—that he may be redeemed from the excruciating

sufferings, the myriads of which attend on sin. Envy at another man's riches, at another's vain-glory, cannot touch the rational being that has an idea of the true dignity of man and his moral end: He knows that we are all, without exception, sent into this life for the purpose of being happy, that no terrestrial chance, independent of ourselves, can add to, or deduct from, that only true happiness which holds its benign reign in our inmost heart, where no outward storm can disturb

its serenity. One moment of this silent but intense bliss is worth a century of gross and cloying sen-

suality. Should the pleasures of the world still be envied?

“ HE never carries his treasures with him in death :
 Surely his glory follows him not !
 And doth he here delight his soul ?
 Thou wilt be called happy hereafter—
 While he goes down unto his fathers,
 And ne’er beholds the glorious light.”

THE first two of the above lines are indeed a repetition of the principle generally upheld through the whole of the Psalm—the nothingness of temporal treasures. But we cannot call the above repetition a superfluous one. It serves, on the contrary, as a very salutary monitor in the moment when the frailty of men would incline them to look with an envious eye on their more prosperous but less virtuous neighbours; and what could more effectually put down the clamours of envy than the sober reflection, that the subject we regret is *now* much—and *then* nothing?

The third and fourth lines admit of a two-fold interpretation, both equally just, and capable of inspiring us with respect for the elegance to be met with in the writings of our honoured forefathers. We have made an attempt at rendering the verse with the same capacity for a diversity of meaning, as we found it in the original; but as we are fully aware, that, had we added to the extent of the sense, we should have curtailed it of its due perspicuity, we

shall here subjoin what we could but vaguely hint at in the translation. It can fairly be inferred from the verse in question, that the poet speaks of the exhortation with which the ambitious man, even at the moment of his dissolution, fires his imagination by saying: “ Fear not, thou wilt be happy hereafter, as happy as thou appearedst to be in the life, at the goal of which thou art arrived;” and if this be the meaning of the passage, the following is the judgment incurred by the boaster; for he goes down to the grave, never to be cherished by the light of the heavenly realms. Nothing is detracted, however, from the grammatical accuracy of the words, if we interpret the whole to be an address from the upright man to his own soul, by the comparison he institutes between the pleasure men of the world enjoy in this life, and the praises of which the soul of the just will be the object in the world beyond the grave, by saying: “ If he seeks his delights here; praises await thee, my soul, in regions which he cannot reach.”

“ MAN invested with highest dignity,
 If he be not wise,
 Must perish, even like the brute.”

THESE last verses forcibly sum up the whole argument on the subject, by conceding to the man wholly wrapped up in worldly pursuits the very acmé of what this life can offer—dignities and its attendants, power and wealth. Still the greatest blessing is not for him, if he be not wise: But true wisdom is incompatible with vice; the demand made upon him is, therefore, that he re-

gard his situation in life, not as a reward for his considerable merits, but as an opportunity offered him by the kindness of heaven to deserve ulterior recompense at the hand of the King of kings, if he wields his delegated and transient authority in the spirit and intentions for which he was entrusted therewith. If he neglect this, he loses with his breath every hope, he must bid farewell to

happiness : Like those of the brute, his satisfactions have been confined to the narrow sphere circumscribed by birth and death. More fatal still than the destiny of the dumb animal is that of such a man ; for the brute ceases to exist altogether when its body decays ; whereas the immortal part of man cannot be destroyed, if even it should deem such a fate desirable. It must attend the summons of the Judge, whose eye searches all hearts, and whose justice returns measure for measure.

THE above Psalm forms a part of the Hebrew ritual, and is read by mourners during the first seven days after their being bereaved of any member of their family. The consolation its strophes are so well fitted

to administer to the harrowed feelings of him from whose side a person dear to his affections has been called by the paternal voice of our Heavenly Guide, can be attested by the thousands who have felt its balmy influence in those moments, when nothing but the words of the living God could soothe their grief. But as the reading of prayers is obligatory on all, whereas properly understanding them is confined to comparatively but few ; we heartily pray, that, by our exposition, however weak, a due estimation of the subject, contained in this consolatory Psalm may be added in the mind of the general reader, to the religious respect which, happily for us, every one of our brethren pays to the Sacred Writings.

על זאת יתפלל כל־חסיד
אליך לעת מצא

“ THIS is the prayer of every good man
To Thee, in the time of mercy.”

IV. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 240.)

THERE was, however, a fifth R. Isaac, contemporary with, or the immediate successor of, his four namesakes, whom we have just enumerated ; whose fame not only eclipsed theirs, but whose works rank high among the productions of Hebrew literature. This was R. Isaac ben Jacob Al-phes, born at Kalah Haman in the kingdom of Fez. On the occasion of some disputes he had with one Barazan Malpha ben Al Anab, and his son Hajim, (of whom nothing further is known,) he was induced to quit his native land, about the year 1089. Having been presented to the Moravide, Joseph ben Taschfin, King of Morocco, he accompanied that conqueror on his expedition to Spain ; and, after having staid some time at Seville, and subsequently at Cordova, he eventually settled at Lucena, where he filled the office vacant through the death of R. Isaac ben Geath.

The African monarch, who had been invited by the Moors of Spain, and who at first had been hailed as a liberator, the keen edge of whose sword was to free them alike from the vexatious oppressions of petty tyranny, and the misrule and confusion of anarchy, soon became the object of general detestation, as a tyrannical conqueror, who knew no limits to his right but his might. R. Al-phes shared in the general dislike entertained against all Africans ; and, though at first received with every demonstration of attachment and respect, he soon began to be looked upon as an unwelcome visiter, not only on account of the odious proceedings of his sovereign, but also for his devoted attachment to the rigid old system of strict Talmudism. R. Isaac ben Baruch, who, through the subversion of the Sevillian monarchy by Joseph ben Taschfin, had lost his wealth, power

and influence, and had become greatly reduced, felt aggrieved that the African intruder (as he professed to call R. Isaac Al-phi) should deprive him of his pupils. He did not conceal his sentiments of dislike; and the consequence was, that their dissensions soon became public. R. Isaac Al-phi, however, soon withdrew from Seville; for, although he was conscious both of his mental and of his political superiority, he was too honourable and noble-minded to aim at supplanting his antagonist. R. Isaac ben Geath (to whose office he subsequently succeeded) likewise declared against him, when, at the instance of R. Joseph Hallevi ben Meir ben Stomikos, one of the leaders of the Jewish community at Cordova, he had been invited to visit that city. The old dispute, between the rigid Talmudists and the admirers of mundane knowledge, which first had broke out between R. Henoch, the son of R. Moses the Babylonian, and R. Joseph ben Stannas ben Abithur, was then revived. The adherents of the ancient stricter system, who had been obliged to yield to the superior influence and talents of the great R. Samuel Levi and of his son R. Joseph, now rallied round their new leader R. Isaac Al-phi. His own transcendent talents, the firmness and energy of his character, and the political influence he possessed with the African monarch, soon gained the ascendancy for his party; particularly as the Grenadians shortly afterwards lost their most influential chief through the death of R. Isaac ben Geath, of Lucena, who, as we have already stated, shortly before his decease, was carried to Cordova for the benefit of his health. The short interval which elapsed between his departure from Lucena and his death, was so well employed by the adherents of R. Isaac Al-phi, that he was appointed to succeed his great antagonist in the vacant office, and by that means gained a decided preponderance for his party.

The use which R. Isaac Al-phi made of his victory was alike creditable to his heart and understanding. While yet in Seville he became acquainted with R. Meir ben Megas,

a son of R. Joseph, of Grenada, who had been an adherent of Balkin, and as such had been obliged to fly from his native city, as we have already related.* He lived on terms of close intimacy and friendship with R. Isaac ben Baruch, steward to the royal household at Seville. R. Meir had an only son called Joseph, who at an early age evinced natural abilities of the very highest order, which excited the attention of R. Isaac ben Baruch. Mindful of the kindness which, under similar circumstances, the great R. Samuel Levi *Hannagid* and his son, the unfortunate R. Joseph, had extended to himself, R. Isaac ben Baruch determined to promote the welfare of the young Joseph by every means in his power. He accordingly became his instructor in the many branches of learning with which he was acquainted, and had the pleasure to find that the rapid progress of the young student kept pace with his expectations, and justified the care he bestowed on him. When R. Isaac Al-phi came to Seville, he formed an attachment for the young Joseph, whose father, although a friend and partizan of R. Isaac ben Baruch, determined to confide the future hopes of his son to the guardianship of the great African teacher: As his own discernment and worldly wisdom taught him that R. Isaac Al-phi, whose eminent talents were supported by the favour of the victorious Joseph ben Taschfin, was a more promising patron than R. Isaac ben Baruch, whose fortunes were ruined with those of his royal master, the king of Seville. R. Isaac Al-phi received the youth, adopted him as his own child, and devoted every care and attention to perfect his education. He was so satisfied with the progress of his pupil, that, after the expiration of fourteen years, he gave the young Joseph a certificate of his merits, in which he praises him as gifted with the highest mental endowments; and adds, that, since the days of Moses, his equal had not been in Israel.

The same noble devotion and solicitude which R. Isaac Al-phi dis-

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II. page 192.

played towards his adopted son, he likewise exercised towards the son of his foe. Shortly before the death of R. Isaac ben Baruch, this great opponent of Al-phes caused his only son Baruch, then seventeen years of age, to be called to his couch, and said to him, with a feeble voice, "Go and tell R. Isaac Al-phes, that I quit this world for another and a better state. At this important moment, when I am about to appear before my Maker and my Judge, I forgive him all the harsh and offensive expressions which, either in writing or verbally, he has made use of against me. Request of him, in my name, that he will likewise forgive me, and pardon every injurious expression to which, in the phrenzy of excitement, I have given utterance against him. When thou hast acquitted thyself of thy errand, stay with him, and profit by his instructions. I know that he will not withhold his protection from thee." After his decease, the youth, in obedience to the paternal commands, departed for Lucena, in order to execute the commission his father had entrusted to him. R. Isaac Al-phesi was deeply affected when he received the last message from his dying antagonist. He burst into tears, and, having attempted to console the youth under the great loss he had sustained, he exclaimed, "Thou art bereaved of thy father! but I will supply his place to thee. Henceforth I am thy father." And most nobly did he redeem his promise. The two young men, Baruch ben Isaac ben Albali and Joseph ben Megas, alike shared his love and tender solicitude. The former became equally distinguished with the latter, and even possessed the additional advantage that he, like his father, by whom he had been educated, was conversant with Greek literature and other branches of mundane study.

R. Isaac Al-phes survived all his namesakes whom we have enumerated, surpassed them and all contemporary Rabbies in fame as well

as influence, and died universally respected and lamented, at the advanced age of ninety years, at Lucena, where he was buried.* He is the author of a great work known and celebrated under the name of Al-phesi or Mahariph, from the initials of his name; which contains a compendium and illustration of Talmud. His object was to place in the hands of the Rabbies a condensed code, containing the juridical parts of the Talmud only, freed from all extraneous admixtures. Accordingly his work became a standard guide, by which actual matters of dispute and questions of conscience are decided. It enjoyed the highest celebrity, even during his life-time, R. Solomon, of Troyes, (Rashi, or Jarchi,) having written comments thereon; and is still looked up to as one of the most useful productions of Rabbinical law literature.

* The inscription on his monument shows the high estimation in which he was held. We insert the follow attempt at translation, as a curious specimen of the style of that age:—

"WRITE with a pen of steel on a tablet of diamond,

To perpetuate the memory of our loss,
That the remotest generations may mourn
And all our descendants weep for him.

Tell them, the Fountain of wisdom lieth
here,

Buried and hidden: Mankind gropes
about in darkness.

Come, ye daughters of Zion, weep and
mourn;

Mourn for him, with bitter lamentations:
For this tomb is the cause of your grief;
Here lieth the ark of the covenant, broken,
And the tables of Testimony shattered to
fragments!

"Here lieth enshrined the chief of chiefs,
the prince of saints, the teacher of the wise,
the divine philosopher and sage, R. Isaac
ben Jacob Al-phes," &c., &c., &c.

It appears that the metrical part of the epitaph (which, together with the monument itself, is still preserved) originally consisted of six lines; the fourth of which, however, is become illegible, although, the same sentiments pervading the whole composition, it becomes easy to replace the lost line.

(To be continued.)

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I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

מ"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 244.)

BELOVED are Israel, to whom was given a delectable instrument: But that love was surpassing which made it known, that to them had been given the delectable instrument wherewith the world was created: As it is said, "For I give you good doctrine, therefore forsake ye not my law." (III. 20.)

COMMENTARY. *Beloved are Israel, for to them was given a delectable instrument*—To man, thus endowed and constituted; gifted with an immortal soul, clothed in, and influenced by, a mortal envelope; composed of a celestial spirit, joined to, and shackled by, a material body; possessed of reason, but not furnished with instinct; free in his will, and uncontrolled in his choice, but responsible for his minutest actions, and obnoxious to punishment for every aberration from the path of rectitude and virtue; capable of felicity, adapted both for the celestial and the terrestrial principles, which combine to form him, but called upon to be the architect of his own happiness, by the persevering practice of piety and righteousness; solicited by his desires, tempted by his appetites, urged on by his passions, and hurried onward by their impetuosity, at a pace so rapid, that feeble reason, marching slowly, and with careful step, can never hope to overtake, much less to check, them;—to man, thus endowed and constituted, what could be more natural, than that the antagonist principles, which are combined in his being, should, in their struggles to attain inward superiority, lead him astray? what is more certain, than that his own unaided reason is so far from deserving unlimited

confidence, that whenever he relies on its guidance he sinks from error to error, and destroys his own happiness? What, therefore, can be more precious, or more important to the human race, than that code which acquaints them with the will of their Creator, which tells them, "Thus must thou do if thou wishest to be happy,—obey my precepts, and thou art safe; they will form a bulwark, from which the assault of thy passions will recoil harmless, and without force; they will form a beacon, the bright light of which will guide thy reason to its celestial home; they are the firm and immovable foundation on which thou art to raise the structure of thy temporal and eternal felicity?" Truly, therefore, did our teacher choose the most proper expression when he called it, בלי חמדה, "a delectable and precious instrument," the proper use of which enables us to work out and attain the great end and aim of our existence.

But that love was surpassing which made it known, that to them had been given the delectable instrument wherewith the world was created—As in the preceding two maxims, our teacher in the present one, likewise, considers the degree of Divine love, which makes known to man the advantages bestowed on him, as superior to that degree which gifted

him with these advantages. If man, gifted with superiority and pre-eminence above all earthly creatures, was left entirely to himself, so that he was not told, and did not know, that he was so supremely endowed, there can be no doubt but the powers latent within him would, in the course of time, have forced themselves on his attention, and he must have made the discovery, that his intellectual capabilities gave him a superiority over all that he sees around him : But had he been so left to himself, without knowing the Source whence these advantages had been bestowed on him, this ignorance must have been highly pernicious to him ; in as much as fancying himself the inventor of that of which he was merely the discoverer,—his mental and reasoning faculties,—he would certainly have made a wrong use of that, for the abuse of which he would consider himself as responsible to no one. But when the Deity vouchsafed to declare, that “man was made in the image of God,” this declaration told the whole human race, that, as their superiority was a trust of which they hereafter have to render an account, it behoves them to be careful not to abuse that trust.

The same remark our teacher justly applies to his third maxim, when he says, that the degree of Divine love which acquainted the Israelites with the fact, that the *torah*, or law of God, had been entrusted to their guardianship, excels that degree of love which bestowed the law on them. If the Israelites had found the sacred code in force by any other nation, without any account of its authority or origin, and without knowing that the observance of its various and minute command was a duty which particularly devolved on them, it is probable that the beauty of its moral precepts might have induced them to adopt these precepts, either wholly or in part ; the importance and utility of its social laws would likewise perhaps have rendered them worthy of their acceptance : But as it came to them in an unauthenticated shape, the sublimest of its doctrines, the absolute unity of God,

—a truth to which the unaided reason of man has never been able to raise itself,—would not only have been above their comprehension, but might, and most probably would, have been rejected, as contrary to their own received opinions, and the example of all other nations around them. And, as they would not have known that this sacred code was particularly entrusted to them, it is probable that they would, from time to time, have been misled by the allurements of innovation, or been ready to forego the observance of those precepts which themselves had selected as often as their interest, their safety, or the will of a superior, required them so to do. Thus a degree of vagueness would have been spread over all the relations of man to his God, to his fellow-creatures, and to himself ; and that temporal and eternal happiness which, as we stated before, was the purpose of his creation, and which can be attained solely by voluntary obedience to the will of God, would have been placed altogether beyond the reach of man, who, as a being gifted with uncontrolled choice and freedom of will, cannot be forced to become happy, but must be the architect of his own felicity.

Thus we see, that though, in any case, it was the Divine love which framed the sacred code of His will, yet the degree of love which proclaimed that code as His revealed will, and told the Israelites that they were appointed to be its guardians and that, therefore, on them devolved the observance of all its minute and particular commandments,—that degree of love was far higher, as it made fixed and certain that which otherwise would have been doubtful, and established on an immutable basis that which otherwise must have depended on the vacillations of human imperfection. Revealed under circumstances the most striking and convincing, within the sight and hearing of nearly three millions of human beings, made palpable, as it were, to the evidence of their senses, this code has descended from generation to generation, its Divine authority so fully established and universally

acknowledged, that none but those few wretched and benighted individuals, who prefer the phantom-light of their own dim reason to the radiant effulgence which bursts from the Sacred Volume, ever attempted to deny its authenticity or truth : And as its contents are thus by unanimous consent declared to emanate from the Deity, the highest degree of stability, truth, and firmness, is found to belong to its doctrines and assertions ; that which otherwise would have been questionable becomes certain. Those sacred truths to which human reason, unaided by revelation, could never have aspired, become clear to our minds, approved by our understanding, and, fixing their impress on our reason, impart to it a degree of strength and certainty which enables it, with steady pace, to follow that sacred guidance which leads it to the goal of its exertions, that true happiness for which it was created. The unity of God, that sublimest of all truths, which places before us a Being incomprehensible in His greatness, of whose infinite perfections our humble faculties cannot even form an idea, much less arrive at full knowledge ; this great and sublime truth becomes at once clearly and fully established in our minds : For He who created the heavens and all its hosts, the earth and all its fulness ; He who revealed Himself on Mount Sinai to our fathers, and declared to them, "I am the Lord thy God," and, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me," (Exodus xx. 2, 3.)

He has also declared, through Moses his servant : "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." (Deut. vi. 4.) And as He, who alone can know himself, has thus vouchsafed to reveal unto us what by no other means we could become acquainted with, we have at once the fullest inward certainty establishing the greatest and most sublime truth, and affording us the heart-felt consolation that, as our Supreme Legislator, who is also the Creator and Preserver of the universe, has revealed unto us his will, and made known to us his commandments, all that we need do is, voluntarily and with a cheerful heart to obey those laws which He has enacted for our happiness : For, as He is perfect, these laws must be the very best adapted for the purpose ; as He is immutable, his laws will undergo no change ; as He is One, it is to Him, and him only, that we can, in the fullest confidence, look up, without the fear that any other being whatsoever has the power to thwart his benevolent designs towards us. Thus the absolute unity of God affords us the certainty, beyond the reach of doubt or cavil, that as He has given us laws, obedience to which he declares to be the means of our attaining the purpose for which we were created ; namely, the greatest possible felicity of which our temporal and celestial principle is capable ; we shall assuredly obtain that felicity, if we do obey his laws ; for He has said it, and who shall gainsay him ?

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim : "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES : " BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 248.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE same reasoning which has induced men to call in question human volition, as irreconcilable with the Divine prescience, has likewise induced them to doubt or deny the efficacy of prayers. Their argument is, that he who maintains the efficacy

of prayer, is reduced to a dilemma ; for either the Deity has decreed that a certain good shall be bestowed on a certain man, or He has not decreed it : If He has decreed, a prayer to attain that good is superfluous ; if He has not decreed, the prayer is unavailing, as it is fully proved that the Deity does not vacillate, or be-

come induced to will at one time what he wills not at another, or not to will at one time what he does will at another : Consequently, as in the one case prayer is superfluous, and in the other unavailing, and as there is no third alternative, - the result is, that prayer can in no case be considered as efficacious. Such is the reasoning which induces these men to maintain that neither righteousness of conduct, nor fervency of prayer, can at all avail man with the Deity, so as to procure for him any good, or save him from any evil, either of which has been decreed to fall to his lot. Job adduces this species of reasoning as frequently made use of by the wicked. He even seems inclined to admit, that it appears to him unanswerable, when he says, as it were doubtingly, if the Deity takes cognizance of human deeds, why does he not punish the wicked for entertaining such an opinion? Job's words on the occasion are, "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes; their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them; their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf; they send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance; they take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ; they spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" (Job xxi. 7-15.) Here it is evident, that the opinions of these prosperous but wicked individuals, to whose thriving state and sophistical arguments Job alludes, were, 1. That a pure and virtuous conduct is unavailing; therefore they say, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him?" And, 2. That prayers are equally useless; therefore they say, "What profit should we have if we pray to him?" These opinions were founded on their belief in fatality, or predestination,

which presides over and controls the chain of events which betide mankind.

From the succeeding parts of the argument we may infer, that Job inclined towards their belief in fatality: Accordingly he says, "Lo, their good is not in their hand. The counsel of the wicked is far from me." (Job xxi. 16.) His meaning is, "I see that the cause of their good, or prosperity, is not in their hand; their own pure and virtuous conduct cannot be the reason why they prosper, for they are eminently wicked; nor does the evil which they commit prevent or impede their happiness; therefore I own, that the counsel of the Deity which has decided that these men should enjoy prosperity, and that their years should glide on in happiness, is far beyond my comprehension; consequently it is predestination which governs the world, and which remains alike uninfluenced by the good that men do, or the evil they become guilty of, since both good and evil are decreed, and the decree must be fulfilled. For if such were not the case, but that virtue and piety did in any respect influence the worldly prosperity of him by whom they are practised, depravity and vice ought likewise to do so; and, in that case, the wicked, instead of being happy and thriving, ought to be unhappy and afflicted." Thus it appears that Job was himself inclined to adopt the opinion of those who thought that every thing was pre-ordained, and that, consequently, virtue and prayers were alike unavailing. But this opinion is most erroneous and unfounded: For the dispensations of providence, whether for good or for evil, are regulated by the capacity of the recipient, from his being in a fixed and certain frame of mind, prepared and adapted for that dispensation. If any good is to be dispensed to man, and he does not prepare himself so as to be in a condition or frame of mind proper to receive the good intended for him, he is himself the cause why the destined good is withheld from him. In order to explain our meaning, we will say, by way of illustration, Providence grants a year of abundance

during which, the corn-fields of a certain man ought to produce so rich a crop that its proceeds would provide for his wants for a length of time; but, in this particular year, this man has neglected to plough his field and sow his seed; he is, therefore, not prepared, or in a fit state and condition, to profit by the bountiful dispensation of providence; for although plenty is scattered around him, of which he ought to have obtained his full share, yet, by his own act and deed, he has excluded himself from partaking of the Divine blessing, which cannot alight on him, because he is not properly prepared to receive it: As in this case neglect in ploughing and sowing is the natural cause which excludes from participating in the Divine favour; so, in every case, if man neglects the practice of virtue and piety, he excludes himself from sharing in those bounteous dispensations of Providence, which are graduated according to the recipient's aptitude and fitness to receive them. What has been said respecting those dispensations of Providence which flow from the Divine favour, is likewise applicable to those which spring from the Divine wrath; they too are graduated according to the recipient's aptitude and fitness to receive them, and the vice and impiety which he has practised. But as both good and evil are dispensed in accordance with the manner in which man is qualified for either, if the qualification varies, the dispensation likewise becomes altered: Accordingly we find that penitence is efficacious; for as it completely changes the moral qualifications of the evil-doer, it likewise alters those afflicting dispensations for which his former frame of mind and course of life had prepared him. In support of this assertion we shall cite the well-known instance of Ahab, king of Israel, who stood unequalled in criminal and sinful conduct, as Holy Writ declares that "he did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him." (1 Kings xvi. 30.) When this king had added perjury to idolatry, and completed his crime of spoliation by murder; and when, in conse-

quence of these atrocities, a grievous punishment was denounced against him, his penitence and heartfelt contrition were of that effect that they in part averted the scourge which was about to alight on him: As we read, "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days." (1 Kings xxi. 29.) As his penitence had in a great degree altered his moral qualifications, he no longer possessed the same aptitude for punishment; and as he had become a new man, he, in so doing, prepared himself for another dispensation of Providence. Another example of the effect of penitence we find in the inhabitants of Nineveh. Of them we read, "Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, for their wickedness is come up before me." (Jonah i. 2.) Their impious and vicious conduct had prepared them for the Divine infliction, and they were fully ripe for the punishment denounced against them: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." But through sincere penitence and a fixed resolve to amend their ways, the Divine wrath was appeased: As we read, "So the people of Nineveh believed in God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even unto the least of them. For word came to the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes, and he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: Yea, let them turn every one from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell but God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not? And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way: And God repented of the evil that He had said He would do unto them, and He did it not." (Jonah iii. 5-10.) Here the

recipients were, by their iniquities, so fully ripe and prepared for the infliction of the Divine wrath, that their doom was actually pronounced against them: But by turning every one from his evil ways, and the violence that was in his hands, by this amended course of life, and the deep-felt penance by which it was accompanied, their moral qualifications were so completely changed that they became, as it were, new men: And whereas, in their former state, they were adapted and fit for the inflictions of the Divine wrath, by penitence and an improved course of life they prepared themselves for the dispensations of the Divine mercy. These instances fully prove the efficacy of penitence in the one case, as of prayer and piety in the other; inasmuch as whenever man prays, he improves his moral qualification, and purifies his mind, so that he becomes better prepared and more fit for the bounteous dispensations of Providence, or removes his great aptitude for punishment.

This opinion is alluded to by Zophar the Naamathite, when he reproaches Job because he prayed not to the Deity to save him from his afflictions, and did not prepare himself by moral improvement to remove that fitness for punishment which had called down upon him the visitation of the Divine wrath. Accordingly he says, "If thou prepare thine heart and stretch out thine hands towards him; if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles; for thou shalt then lift up thy face without spot: yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear," &c. (Job xi. 13-15.) His meaning is: "If thou prepare thy heart by prayer, and improve thy conduct by contrition, there can be no doubt but, through thy supplications and moral purity, thou wilt be saved from thy present grievous sufferings." Thus Zophar asserts that prayer and moral rectitude influence the dispensations of Providence. And in this opinion he is supported by our Rabbies, of pious memory, who say: "It behoves man to be fervent in prayer, as well before his doom has

been decreed, as afterwards." (Talmud, treatise *Rosh-hashanah*, folio 17.) Their meaning is, that, before any actual good or evil has been dispensed to man, as well as after such dispensation has come in force, it behoves man to be fervent in his prayers, and persevering in the practice of virtue, in order to increase that aptitude which renders him a fit object for Divine bounty, or to lessen and remove that aptitude which renders him a fit object for punishment.

As to the objection,—“How can the will and purpose of the Deity be influenced by prayer? since the Deity has at once determined to dispense a certain good, or to inflict a certain punishment, on a man, according to the state of aptitude in which that man was at the time the Divine decree was pronounced,—the supposition, that any subsequent efforts on the part of the man can at all interfere with the Divine will and purpose, is altogether irreconcilable with the omniscience and prescience of the Deity, as it infers an imperfection in the Divine knowledge, which is made to vacillate according to the alternations of human conduct.” As to this objection, we say This brings us back to the question how the Divine foreknowledge of all things can be reconciled with the possibility and power of exercising his free-will inherent in man by his nature. And as we have already proved the utter impossibility of attempting, by means of our imperfect ratiocinations, to define the operations of perfect knowledge, we say, that as certain as it is that the possibility and power of exercising his free-will is inherent in man by his nature, while at the same time the Divine omniscience and prescience is absolute, minute, and universal, although we know not how to reconcile these apparently contradictory axioms, it is equally certain that prayers, penitence, and a virtuous course of life avail much, and influence the dispensations of Providence, although we know not how to reconcile this influence with the absolute foreknowledge of the Deity. Our inability proceeds, in either instance, from the same cause; name-

ly, that, as all our powers are finite and imperfect, they are incapable of conceiving that which is infinite and perfect. But though we cannot understand, we are bound to believe, that which experience and the evidence of our senses proves to be true; both of which species of proof combine to establish the fact that the Deity does hear the prayers of those who supplicate him with ardour and sincerity: and that penitence, virtue, and piety, do influence the decrees of Providence. Accordingly, when Eliphaz finds that Job is inclining towards the opinion of those who say, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him, and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" he tries to reclaim him from that most dangerous and wicked way of thinking; and, after having recapitulated Job's arguments, he exhorts him to renounce them, and says, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. For then thou shalt have thy delight in the Almighty, and

shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows." (Job xxii. 21-27.) Eliphaz here exhorts Job to penitence, to know the infinite perfections of the Deity, and be at peace, under the assurance that no human reason can fathom the counsels of Omnipotence, or define the operations of Omniscience. He admonishes him to submit to the just decrees of Providence, and not to murmur and repine at the merited infliction of his punishment. That it is merited, he leaves us to infer from the advice, "If thou return to the Almighty;" which proves that in Eliphaz's estimation, Job had not done that which is acceptable to the Deity; and that, therefore, it was his duty to renounce his opinions and actions, and return to the Lord. He then shows Job the influence of contrition and virtue, by pointing out to him, that he who now was reduced to the extreme of wretchedness and misery would then be happy, both inwardly and in his worldly state. And in order to show him the only means which are availing to soften the stern decree of justice, he says, "Thou shalt make thy prayer unto God." Supplicate him with ardour and sincerity, "and He shall hear thee." Thy prayer will not be in vain.

(To be continued.)

III. COMMENTARIES ON HOLY WRIT.

(Continued from page 254.)

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

ANALOGY is the most efficient method for conveying, to the mind of man in general, truths not immediately perceptible to the unaided senses. Thus we may, by analogy, deduce rules for the regulation of a mighty empire, from the internal management of the humblest cot; and thus we infer from the daily increase of intellect in a growing child the mental developement of generations through succeeding centuries. The philosopher, too, looks for his knowledge of the moral world to the

analogy in which it stands with the phenomena caused in physical nature: while, by a happy comparison with the things and events of common life, the poet brings nearer home to our feelings the high objects of his imagination. King David, who united in his prophetic character the purest philosophy with the charms of poetry, unceasingly elicits in his unequalled Psalms our admiration [for the grandeur and beneficence of Divine Providence, by paralleling] with its powers which, al-

though infinitely smaller than their great Prototype, are much better adapted to our comprehension. The principle upheld and inculcated into the mind of the attentive reader by the Songs of David, is but one,—steadfast trust in the benevolent guidance of Providence under all circumstances of calm or agitated life; but they are beautifully diversified by eloquent consolations to the suffering, by powerful encouragements to the irresolute, and by vehement denunciations to the reprobate. The Psalmist touches appropriately every tone in the diapason of human feelings, evincing an astonishing acquaintance with all the sensations that agitate our nature. He guides the downcast look of the

broken-spirited towards the Heavenly Source, whence fresh joy will overflow their hearts, and he forces the obdurate scorner, exulting at, and trusting in, his firmness, to look upwards and be dazzled by the powerful light.

The twenty-third Psalm assimilates the watchful care of the Deity over mortals to that of a shepherd over his flock; and in our progress through the parallelism of the Psalm we shall have an opportunity to notice that the pasture-lands spread out to nourish and cultivate man's rational, and therefore more noble, parts, are not less luxuriantly decorated than those laughing meadows destined for corporeal enjoyment.

“ GOD is my Shepherd, nothing I shall lack.
 He sends me to repose on verdant meadows,
 And conducts me to gently-rilling brooks.
 He refreshes my languishing soul :
 He leads me on the path of justice,
 For the glory of his name.”

THE unexpected and miraculous aid by which David was so frequently extricated from troubles sufficient to beat down men of the stoutest hearts, convinced him that he, as well as all other men, stood under the immediate guardianship of the heavenly Father, who permits not the man of guileless heart and spotless conscience to run astray in his wanderings; and, although we are as blind to the dangers that surround us on every side as the bleating sheep, following the call of their leader, we need not fear; for, as impossible it is that the herdsman should lead his flock on barren rocks, where death yawns at them from every abyss, just as impossibly will God suffer the upright man to succumb under the difficulties he encounters in the path of justice and piety. But like the shepherd who leads his trust to the swelling turf; and later, when the beams of the

sun fall with greater force on the languishing animals, to a place of still waters, there to quench their thirst in the limpid stream in the shade of overbending trees, fencing hillocks and forests: So likewise does the Lord deliver the struggling soul of the righteous man from evils which often appear unconquerable; and His might tranquilly guides the steps of the virtuous on the road to justice, Himself pointing out the way. The righteous man, however, will recognise that not his own merits have led him to the discovery of the treasure; not his own wisdom has protected him against vice: He will gratefully acknowledge that virtue was implanted in the soul of man not merely to honour him, but to make him an instrument of glorifying the Eternal Source of all justice and bounty.

“ BUT should I even stray
 Thro' the shadowy vale of death,
 I advance and fear not,
 For thou art with me.
 Thy rod and thy staff
 Are my trust for ever.”

A MAN frequenting a laughing and open scene will hardly stand in need of a guide. Serenity is the best of all companions. But when the terrors of nature surround us, where every vestige of life is vanished from our side, where every thing around us denotes and forebodes death, there we gladly cling to our leader, we seek consolation in the undisturbed countenance of the man who is familiar with the dreadful roaring of the torrent, the hollow echo resounding from the mountain caverns, and the frightful crash of the avalanche. But this guide, our trust in such a wilderness, is but a poor mortal like ourselves, exposed to the same dangers, if not to the same fears. Such is also the case with a flock of sheep, led by their shepherd through a tufty thicket, impenetrable to the sunny light: their insecure step betrays their fear, unless they are continually encouraged by the voice of their guardian. But the Shepherd, whose call guides David, is beyond the access of fear, as he is beyond error; he not only knows how to avoid danger, but also to avert it. Thus knowing that he was under the care of the Omniscient, how should David fear? Not the vale of death—the acmé of misfortunes—is capable of inspiring with dread the mind of the truly religious. Conscious of the will and power of his Pastor to protect him, his only aim is to deserve the favour of so high a patron.

We observe, with admiration, that the Psalmist suddenly changes his speech from the third person into the second. For, now arrived at the description of the vale of death, the representative of the highest degree of calamities that can befall man—he relinquishes speaking of God in juxtaposition with a shepherd of a

flock; it would be vain to search all nature and the operations of man, in order to find a simile to the salvation from the valley of destruction, out of which the omnipotent arm of God alone can raise us. While he was surveying laughing fields, he might entrust the frail hands of man with the Divine office of administering to the wants of those who sought shelter under his protection; but in the dread hour of despair, a moment before destruction, let us look to no one but the Holy One of Israel. Firmly as the confidence of the pious man rests in God, he is not so vain as to imagine that, in return for the obedience he pays, or fancies he pays, to the Divine commandments, no ill should touch him; that the alternate rising and falling of mundane vicissitudes should leave him unaffected. Such a claim upon the Deity is inconsistent with piety, as it is with common sense. The only difference between the suffering sage and the wicked man in tribulation, is, that the former feels satisfied that those misfortunes brought upon him, emanate from the same hand that so often showered blessings upon him and his; that material evil and good are only such in appearance, and often but imaginary; whereas the wicked man is truly miserable, since he never inquired into the cause, and only feels the excruciating effects, of the evils incidental to man. This is expressed in the wise words of our King: “Thy rod of affliction, and thy staff of support, are both my solace.” For David recognised and appreciated the greatness of God as much in the trials with which he was visited, as in the joys which he found in after-days.

“A BANQUET thou preparest for me,
In sight of my enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil,
And fillest my goblet to the brim.”

WE rapidly, though gradually, leave the simile with which the poem began. David acknowledged himself to have been led, by the Divine Shepherd, through pleasant ways, to

the knowledge of justice; he drank from the limpid stream, protected against the scorching heat of youthful passion. But on the verge of manhood, the verdant slope of the

hill delighted him no longer. The events of his life took an appalling turn, and relentless misfortune exacted her claims on him; he paid the tribute due to experience, and came forth purified and strengthened. Smilingly he turns again from the dark picture of distress, and utters words of joy; but his pleasures are no more confined to the simple gratification of finding nurture at the foot of the hill; the Lord who had presided over his life prepares him now for delights of a higher nature

hereafter. All the signs of cheerful exultation are displayed in his description of the banquet. His enemies, those who had so often tried to laugh to scorn his reliance on God, and his ultimate release from persecution, were now brought to the silent avowal, that there is a God to reward and to punish. After the princely fashion of the times, his head is anointed with the precious produce of Ophir, and flowing goblets crown the feast.

BUT

“JOY and bliss follow me
Through life;
And then I rest in the house of the Eternal
During endless days.”

IN the midst of festivities, as in the throng of misfortunes, the thoughts of the godly rise towards the last abode, where the pleasures and woes of this life are wound up, and reduced to their true value. A pleasure devoid of such a contemplation no more deserves the name of pleasure, but is an empty sensuality. If David wishes to see joy on this earth, it is in the noble intention to prepare himself for the possession of the more substantial good

which he had every reason to hope for in the world to come. The curious will remark, that there are several pleasing gradations in the tenor of this psalm: It begins with the description of the food of brutes, and leaves off with the celebration of a royal banquet; it begins by speaking of a mortal shepherd, and finishes with addressing the Eternal; the life of this world is in the first line, but the last line hails the glories of celestial life.

M. H. B.

PREFACE TO THE BOOK OF PSALMS. BY JOEL BRIEL.

(Continued from page 235.)

IN those joyless days David cheered up his drooping spirit with the many pathetic prayers we find in the Psalms. He patiently awaited the fulfilment of the Divine promise; and when his wishes were realized, and the days of grief were followed by long years of joy, his favourite art was now cultivated with heightened pleasure and vigour; he chose it for his constant companion on the throne, as it had been his consoler in the days of trial. He instituted public prayers where the glories of God were chanted by four thousand men, initiated in the art, in songs composed by himself in a masterly style, to be monuments of the repeated changes he had met with in his eventful life, and of his

constant adherence to the law of God, undaunted at the severe fluctuations of his fate. But his happiness was at its culminating height when he fixed the tabernacle of the Lord on the Mount of Zion, —the central point of devotion for the people of God. Louder, and more joyful than ever were at that moment the sounds of his golden lyre; and he left to latest posterity, in his inspired verses, a taste of the delight which thrilled in his bosom when he sang Hosannah to the God of his fathers in the free land of Israel!

Holy Writ has preserved the festive proceedings of David when the ark of the covenant was removed from the house of Abinadab:

"And David, and all the house of Israel, played before the Lord on all manner of instruments, made of firwood, even on harps, on psalteries, on timbrels, on cornets, and on cymbals." (2 Samuel vi. 5.) And on the occasion of the transfer of the ark, three months later, from the house of Obed, the Edomite, it is mentioned, that "David danced before the Lord with [all] his might, and David was girded with a linen ephod," and all the people, (2 Samuel vi. 14,) which proves how considerably the knowledge of music had been propagated among the children of Israel, after the days of Samuel, since the king could avail himself of the skill of so many thousands for the object of this pious and national procession. By the sixty-eighth Psalm, in which David describes that solemnity, we are informed, that timbrels were still the musical instruments played on by the Hebrew women, as in verse 25, "The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels."

The ark of the covenant having been deposited in the selected sanctuary, the king caused the internal discipline of the tent, destined for the worship of the Most High, to be regulated in the spirit of the Mosaic institutions.* Four thousand Levites assumed their functions as servants to the Lord, for the purpose of praising God daily, to the sound of musical instruments, which David had chosen. They consisted of viols, harps, and cymbals. This choir was graced by the chief songsters, men of consummate skill in music and poetry, two hundred and eighty-eight in number, out of whom another selection was

made, of twenty-four leaders, all of the families of Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun; thus forming, in the aggregate, the most imposing orchestra which ever existed.

It is demonstrated by the Talmud, (treatise, ערבין,) that every member of Israel was admissible to the choir of songsters, who blessed the people in Psalms, and accompanied their songs with music; but to laymen this leave was limited to the performance of music only, none being qualified to join in the verbal prayers pronounced by the Levites. Many of our Rabbies go even so far as to claim the privilege of performing on musical instruments, before the assembly of the people, for the women of Israel; granting, however, their having been excluded from the interior of the temple; which would lead us to suppose, that a hall, adjoining the temple, had been employed for that purpose: And the advocates for this conjecture seek their vouchers in the passages we have already mentioned, where women share in the public festivities, and sometimes even take a prominent part in them, as in the instance of Miriam, Deborah and Barak, the daughter of Jephthah, &c.; they moreover find a corroboration of their opinion in 1 Chronicles xxv. 5, 6, wherein it is said, "And God gave to Heman fourteen sons, and three daughters. All these were under the hands of their father for song, in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God." This opinion is, however, far from being generally received; and the authority of the last-mentioned verse, as a proof for that opinion, is even objected to on various grounds. The curious may consult on this point the writings of our blessed sages in treatise, ערבין, the Works of Maimonides, the Illustrations by Rabbi Bartanura, the שלטי הגבורים, and the Jewish Antiquities of Josephus, where they will find every desirable information respecting the place in which the Levites addressed their prayers to the Deity, the number of pupils attached to the Levites for

* In 1 Chron. xv. the three chief musicians are denominated, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan; whereas, the seventeenth chapter mentions Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun. The solution given to the question which might arise from this variation is, that Ethan died, perhaps after having attended on the removal of the ark, and then Jeduthun was, by king David, substituted for him; or that the same person was called by either name, as is found to be repeatedly the case in Scripture.

the purpose of administering to them during worship, the number of instruments appropriated for each festivity, and whatever might be requisite for the attentive student, who delights in the knowledge of godly things. Our chief object being to throw some additional light on the road leading to a perfect understanding of the Psalms, we must abstain from carrying our remarks to any point beyond our purpose.

Solomon, the wisest and happiest of kings, afterwards sat on the throne of David, and carried the cultivation of music to a point which it had never previously reached, and which it did not long maintain. This king, himself a proficient in that delightful art, raised the dignity of the musicians, in the newly-built temple, by the splendour with which he surrounded them, and brought the external appearance of the Levites on a par with the solemn duties they were called to perform. Multitudes stood in awful silence, when Solomon addressed the Deity in that impressive prayer, recorded in the sixth chapter of the Second Book of Chronicles. The inspired words of the truly great king diffused the emotions of his own heart through the whole multitude, and every one felt that he was in the vicinity of the Invisible.

Then the Levites, clad in the finest linen of Egypt (*byssus*) struck their instruments, wrought with exquisite workmanship of tyne-wood, the produce of distant Ophir, which was brought to Jerusalem in king Solomon's ships; and from thousands of voices ardent prayers and sincere thanksgivings were sent to heaven, which found a solemn echo in the wide and crowded enclosure of the temple. But we rapidly fell:—Forgetful of the numerous benefits showered upon them by the Deity from the infancy of their existence as a nation, the children of Jacob forsook the law laid on their hearts on Sinai, from the midst of clouds and thunder. Rehoboam, their impious king, took the lead in the march to destruction; and, according to the words of Isaiah, on another occasion, "The mirth of tabrets ceased."

Piety was neglected, and indifference for those whose province it was to instruct the people, and to preside at the offices of piety, was the necessary consequence. Unhappy as those and the subsequent times were for the Israelites, on account of the sufferings they underwent, it is much more to be deplored that they deserved them. Whenever a king, worthy of being distinguished among the corrupt leaders of Judah for some redeeming quality, ascended the throne of David, music still in some measure regained its salutary influence on the minds of the people. While we see the many bad kings who swayed the sceptre of either division of the twelve tribes in cruelty, or wasted their days in barbarous sensuality, in imitation of the heathenish kings of surrounding nations; we are glad to see, that the good king Jehoshaphat appointed singers to the Lord, when he had consulted with the people; (2 Chron. xx. 21;) and again on his return from the valley of Berachah, where God had given the Moabites into his hands, he entered Jerusalem "with psalteries, and harps, and trumpets, unto the house of the Lord." (*Ibid.* 28.) Hezekiah, too, who did right before the Lord, re-established the public service in the temple, according to 2 Chronicles xxix. 25: "And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet," &c. Josiah, the last good king of Judah, of whom it is said, that "he neither turned to the right hand nor to the left from the ways of his father David," among his other meritorious deeds, re-appointed "the singers, the sons of Asaph, to their places, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer." (2 Chron. xxxv. 15.) But those bright spots, few, and far between, in the lives of the kings of Israel, are not sufficient to dispel the gloom which renders the history of our people at that time so peculiarly sad. Distressing as the reigns of Joram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, Ahaz, and Manasseh were to the general welfare of

the nation, they were particularly detrimental to the cultivation of music, from the total neglect into which the worship of the Eternal had fallen in the city of Jerusalem, where idols had been set upon altars over against the holy of holies, and the abominations of Baalim had been substituted for the pure and beneficial adoration of the one living God. And when, in the days of Zedekiah, we met with the fate caused by our national transgressions, the voices of our forefathers were seldom after lifted up in accents of joy. In melancholy strains they wept on the shores of the Euphrates over the horrors of exile, over the bitter loss of nationality, and suspended their harps on the willows bordering the stream, as if the instruments of mirth had become useless to them for ever. The songs which remain from those days have all the characters of grief imprinted on them; but, though recollections of the dismal days of captivity, these songs have an additional charm in the lively interest they excite for the sufferers; witness the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm, above alluded to. To mourn over the lost splendour of Jerusalem, and to acknowledge the justice of God in the very blows he had struck, was their sole means of cheering their dejected spirits, and of rekindling in their bosoms the dormant spark of hope for better days. And when Cyrus, moved to pity by God, sent our fathers back to till their own land and to enjoy the sweets of home, they merrily entered on the hallowed ground of their native country, preceded by two hundred musicians of both sexes. (Ezra ii. 65.)

Not only at the festive meetings in the temple, but also in the private chambers of his palace, David was wont to delight his soul with music; his predilection for that art urged him to seek leisure enough to cultivate it in the midst of his warlike operations, and the overwhelming cares of government. Proficient artists stood daily before him, and sang, to the sound of music, the poems he had composed during the days of his youth, and in the time of his honourable reign; the king him-

self accompanying on his favourite harp. Vocal and instrumental music soon found their way to the banquets of the great; and alas! when the nation degenerated, this was the case in a much higher degree: Hence the reproof hurled at the lascivious men of his times by the princely Isaiah;—"And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands," (Isai. v. 12,)—and by the stern prophet Amos;—"That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David;" (Amos vi. 5;)—for now the songs of David were neglected, and shameful ditties lulled the hearts of the profligate into forgetfulness of the duties of man. It is a fact worthy of notice, and attested by every line in history, that sciences serve to enlighten a virtuous nation, and arts to ennoble the feelings of the uncorrupted; but degenerate people use those gifts of heaven as purveyors to their guilty appetites. Soaring poetry is vilified into a flattering slave, prostrate at the feet of a dreaded tyrant; music is stripped of all intrinsic grandeur, and made the companion of revelry, to impart a richer zest to sensual surfeit; and heavenly philosophy, the child of reason, the beloved guide of conscientious man, is twisted into sophistry, thence lowered to scepticism, till it perishes in the all-extinguishing horrors of atheism. The examples of nations and individuals, of times past and present, all concur to establish the sacred words of the Royal Instructor: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom." In a passage closely following the one above mentioned, Isaiah represents to the perverse men of Judah and Israel, the abuses they had made of music by the trivial purposes for which they employed it, thus totally estranging it from the holy ends for which the schools of the children of the Prophets had been instituted by Samuel the seer and David the king. Nor was the time of harvest, both in the field and vineyard, without this never-failing attendant on merriment, with the Hebrews. Though Isaiah xvi. 14—

"But now the Lord hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble"—refers to Moab, we may still gather, from numerous other sayings of the prophets, that the Jews celebrated the festivities of the seasons with the same demonstrations of joy as the nations around them, since, whatever might have been the occasion of their mirth, they knew of no public rejoicings that could dispense with the accompaniments of song, music, and dance, as has been clearly made out in the various quotations we have adduced in support of our preceding remarks.

Nor, indeed, were they strangers to pathetic and lugubrious music; for it says, "And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: And, behold, they are written in the Lamentations." (2 Chron xxxv. 25.) And from the beautiful elegies by David on Jonathan and Saul, the Lamentations of Jeremiah on the

destruction of the city and temple of Zion by Nebuchadnezzar, we may conclude that music, adequate to the tenor of the poetry, had been composed for those songs. The Rabbies, indeed, inform us, that every Israelite engaged two men and one woman to chant funeral hymns at the death of any member of his family; as alluded to in Jeremiah ix. 17: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for cunning women, that they may come." For nothing is so calculated to rouse the drooping energy of the mind as music suited to our different states; it is equally congenial to our feelings in times of pleasure and woe; its attractions assert their power over the minds of all men. No where on earth is there a savage whose soul may not be fired by music, whose languor may not be excited or dispelled by the sweet sounds stealing on his heart. Even the more rational among the brutes feel the all-penetrating influence of that harmony with which the Psalmist has compared the wonders of creation.*

M. H. B.

* Vide Psalm xix. 4, et seq.

V. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 256.)

ALTHOUGH R. Isaac Al-phes, who, by his transcendent talents and great influence, succeeded to re-establish the supremacy of the Talmudic school, is decidedly the most celebrated name of his era, whose fame obscured that of all his contemporaries: there are some of these who merit our attention, particularly as their labours had a very different aim and purpose from that to which he directed his efforts. Among these the first in time, as well as in importance, is R. Salomon ben Judah ben Gabirol, a pupil of R. Samuel Han-nagid, born at Malaga, but residing in Saragossa. He was a man of great and varied attainments; at first devoted to the study of moral and natural philosophy, he subse-

quently became a poet, and wrote odes. In his youthful days he wrote a work in Arabic, on the moral improvement of man. At a riper age he wrote Hebrew poems, with the intention to instruct his unlearned brethren in the fundamental principles and truths of religion and moral philosophy; and also to teach them the numerous precepts of the law, which it behoves them to know and to observe. Some of his odes, likewise, contain beautiful illustrations of the laws of nature, and the system according to which the various parts of the universe are governed. All his writings recommend themselves by the purity of the Hebrew with which they are composed, and by the harmony of their numbers, to

gether with the great attention bestowed on grammatical accuracy. All Jews are acquainted with his glowing and animated description of the Divine Being, and the universal system, which, in a rhymed ode, called *Kether Malchuth*, forms part of the liturgy for the day of atonement. Many others of his hymns and odes still form part of the service of the synagogue. All of them show his noble and lofty mind, his purely religious intentions, and high poetic genius, although it cannot be denied that he is too much addicted to play upon words; and indulges in puns to an extent which can only be excused by the then-prevailing taste formed by Arabic literature. But though we of the present day may say, that, in a religious poem, a play upon words is hardly in its proper place, yet, in his own times, they secured to the poet unqualified admiration; and the severest critic must confess that the poems of R. Salomon Gabirol abound in so many beauties, and develope so complete a mastery of the Hebrew language, that the flexibility and high poetic spirit of the sacred tongue is not so fully displayed in other works, with the exception of the Scriptures.

The undertaking of R. Salomon was equally useful and praiseworthy, as it served to enlighten the minds of his people, and to furnish them with the most indispensable knowledge, by means as simple as they were agreeable; and there can be no doubt but the good he would have effected would have been very great, had he not met with an early and untimely death. An Arabian,—some historians aver it to have been a Jewish merchant,—jealous of his great talents and extensive knowledge, and envious of the fame and distinction which he had attained, and the fortune which awaited him, murdered R. Salomon, in the thirtieth year of his age, and buried him in his (the murderer's) garden. The manner in which this foul deed is related to have been discovered is so singular, as plainly to show the retributive justice of Providence. It is said, that, close by the spot where the murderer interred the body of the unfortunate R. Salomon, there

stood a young date-tree, which suddenly, and before the usual age, began to bear fruit. This rare precocity excited the attention of the curious Arabs; and the owner of the garden was summoned before the Emir, or Arab prince, to explain, if he could, the cause why this date-tree bore fruit so much earlier than others. Alarmed and confused, the murderer, in the course of his explanation, admitted the fact that a human body was interred under this tree; and, on being further questioned, he confessed that it was the body of R. Salomon ben Gabirol. The murderer was immediately seized, tried, convicted, and executed, by being hung on that very tree which had caused his detection.

Contemporary with R. Salomon ben Gabirol, and, in part, formed by his example, and excited by the great encouragement he obtained, were several minor poets. Among them we mention R. Isaac ben Chalephon, of Denia, on the coast of the Mediterranean. To him we are indebted for introducing into the Hebrew a perfect system of prosody; although it must be confessed, that his extreme attention to regularity and technical correctness proved injurious to the poetic beauties and merits of his writings. Of R. Joseph ben Hasdai, only one ode has survived and reached us; but it bears the stamp of masterly abilities. We have already mentioned R. Joseph ben Stanas, who, though of a somewhat earlier period, holds an honourable rank amongst Jewish poets; as does likewise R. Isaac ben Geath. Numerous other writers, of less note, prove the fecundity of the age in learning and talents; and though we neither can nor will enumerate all those, fragments of whose labours have been preserved to us, it would be unjust not to rescue from oblivion the names of the sublime and pathetic R. Isaac ben Ruben, or the lofty and ardent R. Judah ben Barsili, worthy successors of R. Salomon ben Gabirol, whose purity of diction, and genuine poetic spirit, they successfully emulate.

Talmudic learning and poetry did not altogether absorb the talents and attention of the Spanish Jews.

The grammar of their language, the Hebrew, was likewise an important subject of their studies, to which they devoted the greatest care, as is proved by the numerous grammatical writers of that age. As physicians, the Jews enjoyed the very highest reputation, and produced several eminent writers on that science. We particularly mention R. Isaac al Melek, who had been adopted as a son by Soliman, king of Cordova, and who subsequently attained great fame as a medical writer and practitioner. His numerous works were published by his son R. Joseph, who likewise was celebrated as a skilful physician. As a writer on moral philosophy, we mention R. Bechai ben Joseph ben Pekuda, the elder, who lived at Barcelona, towards the middle of the eleventh century. His great work, חובת הלבבות "on the duties of the heart," originally written in Arabic, still enjoys the highest reputation among the Jews, both on account of its pure diction, and of its sublime morality.

We have here mentioned only a few, and they the most celebrated of the immense number of learned contemporaries, whose names have been preserved to us. Learning, animated by a spirit of rivalry and emulation, encouraged by the attention and favour it met with even from monarchs, and of importance to its professors, whom it endowed with honours, preferments, wealth, and power, was carried on with all that ardour and enthusiasm for which the Jewish nation is distinguished. Possessed of perfect freedom, on a footing with the other inhabitants of the peninsula, the Jews could not only keep pace with their Arab rulers in the race for knowledge, but even outstrip them. Learning spread its genial influence far over the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean. The Jews of France and of Italy caught the generous impulse, and produced men worthy of being named with

their Spanish brethren. And though, beyond the peninsula, the Jews could not boast the same social consideration and political influence, it is certain that they possessed more real liberty and consequent happiness in the age immediately preceding the first Crusade, than they have ever done from that period until the most recent times.

R. Isaac Al-phes was, at his death, succeeded by his beloved pupil R. Joseph ben Megas, as chief of the congregation at Lucena. Jointly with him, R. Baruch ben Albali, the companion of his studies and friend of his youth, presided over the school, which the talents of R. Isaac Al-phes had raised to be the first in Spain; an eminence which his two pupils knew how to maintain, as they united in friendly emulation the two antagonist systems, which, till then, had divided the Jews. R. Joseph was as admirable for his Talmudic learning, as R. Baruch was distinguished for his philological and philosophical talents. The school in which they both taught became the *beau-ideal* of Jewish colleges. Far and near the Jewish youth flocked to Lucena, where, free from that spirit of dissension which had formed two hostile parties of the adherents of R. Henoch, the son of R. Moses the Babylonian, and those of the unfortunate R. Joseph ben Stanas ben Abithur, the students had placed before them profane and sacred knowledge; and while that attention was paid to the latter to which it is entitled as the most important, the former was not restrained within limits so narrow as to leave the thirst of the student unquenched. Accordingly this school produced the greatest names of which the Jews can boast, and which, in due course, we shall submit to our readers; namely, R. Judah Hallevi, R. Abraham ben Meir Aben Ezra, and R. Moses Maimonides, who had all carried on, or completed, their studies in the school at Lucena.

(To be continued.)

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I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 259.)

BELOVED are Israel, to whom was given a delectable instrument: But that love was surpassing which made it known, that to them had been given the delectable instrument wherewith the world was created: As it is said, "For I give you good doctrine, therefore forsake ye not my law." (III. 20.)

COMMENTARY. *For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law*—The value and importance of the laws which the Deity has deigned to confer on his chosen people, are fully evidenced and confirmed by the quotation which our teacher cites in support of his assertion, that Israel are highly beloved by the Deity. The sentence, though concise, is emphatic; and, though short, it tells us all that we require to know respecting the nature and purpose of the Divine laws. Their nature is indicated by the words "good doctrine." Accordingly when we turn our attention to the precepts inculcated by the law of Moses, we find that, under every circumstance which can occur, and in every relation of life, the instruction its doctrines convey, and the duties which they enforce, are absolutely good; that is to say, will not admit of any gradation or comparison of better and best; but are all, and every of them, perfectly good, as the dictates and emanations of a Being in whom every possible perfection is centred. Accordingly when we examine the enactments of the law of Moses, we find that, though there may be some of them the reason of which is not perfectly clear to our finite comprehension, (such as the red heifer, mixed garments, and others of the same

kind,) they all bear that impress of perfect good, which is inherent in their Great Author; and it is remarkable, that these laws form the fullest and most extensive code that ever claimed the obedience of man—embrace every possible relation of life, and all its duties, moral, social, and religious. The law of Moses, while it lays down rules for the guidance of the king, who, by the choice of his brethren, has been raised to the throne, does not lose sight of the rights of that humblest and meanest member of the commonwealth whom misconduct has deprived of his freedom and reduced to slavery: Nay, more, the over-wrought beast of burthen, the very bird sheltering on a twig, are objects of solicitude to that Legislator, to whom all that exists owes its being, and who, better than any other, knows that indifference for the sufferings of animals soon degenerates into cruelty towards men.

Thus no subject escapes the attention of the Divine Legislator; and, as is to be expected, His precepts are not merely better than any others, or the best that can be given; but they are good in the fullest and most absolute sense of the word; so that whatever, in any degree, deviates from, or gainsays, the rules they lay down, and the duties they inculcate,

is no longer good, but must be bad. Of this we shall easily convince ourselves when we consider them according to the different divisions which they present to us; namely, Religious, Moral, Ceremonial, and Social.

1. In its religious doctrines, the law of Moses offers us a series of truths, acceptable to our reason, and confirmed by experience and the evidence of our senses, to the knowledge of which we had no means of arriving, except by Divine revelation. Such are, that our Divine Legislator is one, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, all-merciful, just, and perfect, in so infinite a degree, that we cannot form any comprehension of His wondrous essence: So that, when we speak of his attributes, we are obliged to employ terms, either altogether inadequate to the subject, or to which we can assign no precise meaning:— That this inexpressibly great and perfect Being is the First Cause of all existence, the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe, whose bounty upholds what his power created, and his wisdom governs:— That His providence is extended to all his creatures, but particularly to man, of whose every action He takes cognizance, and exacts a responsibility: And that, as He is the sole Ruler of all, He alone ought to be worshipped. As these doctrines form the fundamental principles of all religion, which can lay claim to the appellation “true,” and convey to our minds the only idea which is in any degree worthy of the Deity, it follows not only that they must be absolutely good, but that whatever contradicts or militates against these doctrines, and the principles which they involve, must be bad; because all these doctrines form a whole so closely and intimately connected, and of such perfect correspondence, in all its parts, that it is impossible to gainsay any particular, however minute, without disturbing the harmony of the whole; and as that harmony is confessedly good, whatever disturbs or deranges it, cannot be so.

2. Its moral laws are the most pure, and in close connection with the religious doctrines and princi-

ples which we have just enumerated. For as the Great Legislator is omniscient and just, as He takes cognizance of all human actions, and holds man responsible for his conduct, it thence results that such actions only, as in their nature and effects bear some resemblance to His attributes and qualities, can be acceptable to Him, and obtain His approbation: Whereas those actions which, in their nature and effects, bear no resemblance, but, on the contrary, are opposed to his attributes and qualifications, cannot be acceptable to Him, nor obtain His approbation. Accordingly the law of Moses gives us one general rule for our guidance, namely, “Thou shalt walk in his ways.” On which our Rabbies remark: “The meaning of walking in his ways, is to imitate His attributes: as He is merciful, so must thou be merciful; as He is just, so must thou be just; as He is long-suffering, so must thou be long-suffering, &c. Subject to this general rule, and in conformity with its spirit, the law of Moses proceeds to lay down for our guidance certain precepts, according to which our actions are to be regulated, and by which we are to be governed, under all circumstances. And as all these bear a resemblance, or, in some degree, approximate to the Divine attributes and perfections, it again ensues that these precepts must be absolutely good, and that whatever departs from them cannot be so.

3. The ceremonial or ritual observances of the law of Moses are stamped with the same impression of perfection and Divine authority which marks its religious doctrines and moral precepts. As man is indebted for every good that he enjoys to the bounty of his Creator; as, whatever his situation in life, however great his power, profound his wisdom, and extensive his possessions, he is still dependent on the Great Ruler of the universe, the Sovereign Disposer of life and death; gratitude for past, and the want of future, mercies render it his duty to offer his thanks and orisons to the Supreme Author of all existence. And as man must likewise feel, that

in none of his actions has he strictly and perfectly obeyed the Divine command, or come up to the standard which the law of his God has fixed as an example; whereas in very many of his actions, he has altogether departed from that standard, and acted contrary to those commands: As man knows this, and also knows that the Deity is just and merciful, he feels the necessity of appeasing the Divine justice, and of supplicating the Divine mercy. This sense of his dependence on the Divine power, of gratitude and love for the Divine goodness, and of awe at the Divine justice, is so fully implanted in man's nature, that even those who have lost all trace of the Divine revelation to Adam and Noah, and who, mistaking the effects for the cause, have directed their worship to the powers of nature, instead of Him who gave existence to these powers; or those others, who, in defiance alike of their own reason and the evidence of their senses, have prostituted their adoration by kneeling to the insensate block, which received its form from the hand of the sculptor: Even these have implored the bounty and protection of the objects of their mistaken devotion. But as cruelty and sensuality are the inseparable companions of idolatry, we find that while some went so far as to immolate their own offspring on the reeking altars of Moloch, a grim idol which their own fancy had engendered; others prostituted their wives and daughters before the smiling image of Venus, intended to personify the productive power of nature. And if we examine the rites and ceremonies attendant on the various systems of worship adopted and practised by the heathen world, we find that generally they are alike repugnant to reason, and revolting to humanity: But not so the ceremonial and ritual observances of the law of Moses. It confirms the great duty of prayer, which man owes to his Maker, and that both our love and fear should combine in His worship: As the Sacred Scriptures tell us, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God:" And "The Lord thy God thou shalt fear, and him

alone shalt thou serve." It also enacted sacrifices of different kinds. Some of an expiatory nature, in acknowledgment of sin and supplication of mercy; others as tokens of gratitude and joy at the Divine bounty: And though opinions are divided as to the nature and purpose of these sacrifices;—some maintaining that they were ordained solely to prevent the Israelites from falling into idolatry, and adopting the rites used at the worship of strange gods; and citing in support of their opinion the words of the prophet, "I spoke not to your fathers, and I did not command them on the day I brought them out from the land of Egypt concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing I commanded them, saying, Obey my voice;" (Jeremiah vii. 22, 23);—while others assert that the sacrifices were instituted with an essential aim and purpose, in order to strike the mind of the sinner with the reflection, that "the animal which I have immolated was but now in the fulness of its vigour: It is now utterly consumed, and nothing of it is left but the act of having sacrificed it in obedience to the Divine will and pleasure, as expressed in the book of the law. I too must die! my firm-set limbs will be consumed, and of me, too, nought will survive and remain but obedience to the will of my Creator." Though opinions are thus divided respecting the nature and purpose of sacrifices, yet it is a fact universally acknowledged, that they were Divinely instituted; which is fully proved by the fire from heaven descending and consuming the sacrifice on the altar: As was the case with Moses in the tabernacle, with David in the barn of Araunah, with Solomon in the temple, and with Elijah on Mount Carmel: And as thus the one part of the ritual and ceremonial observances enjoined by the law of Moses (prayer) is not only consonant to our reason, but its propriety is implanted in our nature; while the other part (sacrifices) is proved by the most direct and full evidence of the senses, to have been instituted by Divine authority: And as there can be no question but the Divine legislator must best have

known the devotional ceremonies which are acceptable to him; it ensues that the ritual and ceremonial observances of the law of Moses must be absolutely good, because they, above all others, are acceptable to the Deity.

4. The social enactments laid down by the Deity in the law of Moses rest on the fundamental principle, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself;" which, as we have already fully elucidated, is not only practicable according to the true intent and meaning of the legislator, but extends in its operation to every human being who is made in the image of God, and therefore "like thyself." In accordance with this fundamental principle which pervades the whole system, the rights and duties of citizens on and towards each other are defined with the most scrupulous equity, and secured with the most just discrimination: The rights of the husband and of the father, of the wife and of the children, of the king and of his subjects, of the rich and of the poor, of buyer and of seller, of him who wantonly or accidentally injures, or is injured; are laid down with precision: Attention is paid to the welfare of every individual member of the commonwealth; and, while every protection is afforded to person and property, care is taken that even he who sinks so low, that after having alienated his patrimony, has been obliged to part with his liberty, should still possess a stake in the commonwealth, and have a direct as well as contingent interest, in upholding its institutions; for, after six years, his own personal liberty was restored; and, after fifty years, he was reinstated in the possession of his patrimonial inheritance. Nor was it their own social relations which the Israelites found in the law of Moses, but the principles of international law, and the footing of amity and concord, in which they are to live with neighbouring nations, are worthy of the place assigned to them in this code. And as the social laws, which treat of man's duties towards his fellow men are in the closest and most intimate connexion with the ceremonial

laws, which treat of his duties towards His Creator, and the moral laws which treat of his duties towards himself; and as these different branches of the same system all spring from the knowledge of truth, inculcated by the doctrines of religion, it follows that the whole must be absolutely good, and that whatever departs therefrom cannot be so.

Having thus proved with what perfect justice the appellation of "good doctrine" is given to the precepts of the law, the remaining part of our teacher's quotation instructs us what is our duty with respect to this Divine code, and the purpose for which it was given: Namely, "forsake ye not my law." As this law, which was revealed to our ancestors on Mount Sinai, and in which they were instructed by Moses, the chosen servant of God, is in all its parts perfect and good; as it embraces every possible relation, defines every possible duty, and is applicable to every case that may occur; and, consequently, provides for all our moral and mental wants, the Deity requires that, in return for the invaluable gift He has bestowed on us, we should mark our sense of His goodness, and of our own obligations, by adhering to this law, making it our guide and rule in every case, and never forsaking it. Moreover, as the will of the Creator is that all his creatures should be happy; as His rational, terrestrial creatures are destined to a future state of existence, in which they will be happy according to their conduct during their temporal career; and as that conduct cannot be regulated by principles more good, or more acceptable to the Deity than those He has himself laid down, "therefore forsake ye not my law." And as the Deity is One and immutable; as to Him there is no gradation of time, so that past, present, and to come, appear but as an instant in his eternity; and, therefore, what He wills once He wills for ever; do not ye forsake the law which He has once proclaimed for your guidance and government. Accordingly, Holy Writ commands us, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One! And thou shalt love the

Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might: And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up: And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." (Deuteronomy vi. 4-9.) Holy Writ first tells us that the Lord our God is One: As His unity is absolute, inherent, and unconditional, He must be perfect; and, being perfect, He must be immutable. As, therefore, it is from Him we receive every good, we, in return, are bound to love him with all our heart. And as He has vouchsafed to reveal his will unto us, and to bestow on us a code of laws, it is our duty, at all times, to have the words of that law present to our minds; therefore we are to teach them diligently to our children, not only that they may obtain, but that we may also retain, a proper knowledge of these laws. Under all circumstances, and in every relation of life, the Divine law is to be our guide and rule of conduct; therefore we are to "bind them for a sign

upon thine hand," in order that it may govern our actions; "and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes," to control our thoughts. And as their observance concerns alike the whole nation, and every one of its members, the words of the law are to be written "on the posts of thy house," for the guidance of private families; "and on the gates" of thy cities, to show that the whole commonwealth is governed by the same laws. Thus we see that Holy Writ itself enforces the constant observance of the law, and adherence to its great precepts. The knowledge which is thereby acquired is declared to be "your wisdom and your understanding, in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." (Deut. iv. 6.) As all people are prone to imitate and adopt what they admire, the observance of the Divine laws, by the Israelites, was a means of introducing these laws to other nations: And as the Israelite is, by the covenant of his God, appointed to be the instructor of all nations, and has, therefore, been beloved above all others, by having the law of his God confided to him, he must always have present to his mind the quotation of our teacher, "For I give you good doctrine, therefore forsake ye not my law."

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 263.)

CHAPTER XIX.

THE blessings which prophets, pious and righteous men, pronounce on others, are a subject which has caused commentators to go astray; nor have they yet been able to remove, in a satisfactory manner, the difficulties which stood in the way of their respective explanations. They all maintain that the subject is open to a doubt, and, consequently, to a difference of opinion; namely, Are

blessings merely prayers, or are they prophetic predictions of future events? If the former, namely, that to bless is but to pray that the Divine bounty may be extended to a certain individual; why, then, did Isaac become so greatly alarmed when he had bestowed his blessing on another than Esau? As Holy Writ relates, "And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that has taken venison and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before

thou camest, and have blessed him? Yea, and he shall be blessed." (Gen. xxxii. 33.) Why did he not repeat the same prayer in favour of Esau, that he had before pronounced on behalf of Jacob, as there can be no doubt but that his prayer for Esau must be more efficacious and likely to be heard, than his former supplication for Jacob; for the one was pronounced in the fulness of his heart, and on behalf of the man whom he intended to bless; whereas, Jacob's benediction had been obtained by deceit, and was not, according to Isaac's intention, directed to him at all? It is, therefore evident, from Isaac's tremour, and particularly from his positive declaration, "*Yea, and he shall be blessed,*" that blessings are of a higher character than mere prayers. But if blessings be prophetic predictions of future events, how comes Esau to exclaim, "He took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing?" Or how comes Isaac to say, "*I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants, and with corn and wine have I sustained him, and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?*" (Gen. xxvii. 36, 37.) If the blessing Isaac pronounced was the prediction of events which assuredly were to take place, Jacob's deceit could not alter the course of these events, or take away Esau's blessing; nor would Isaac have the right to say, "I have made," "I have given," and, "I have sustained;" as he had merely foretold what was to happen, but could add nothing of his own accord. So that neither he himself nor Esau had any real cause of complaint, except that Jacob should have deceived them.

To reconcile these difficulties many attempts have been made; most of which have failed to give satisfaction, because the commentators placed themselves in a dilemma, by supposing that blessings must absolutely be either one or other of the two alternatives. The most probable opinion advanced on the nature of blessings, is, that they partake of both prayer and prophecy. The prophet foresees that which is to happen, and prays that the good

which is intended for the individual whom he blesses, may become increased: For instance, he foresees that one man will prosper in agricultural pursuits; his blessing, therefore, is, that, when he sows, he may "receive an hundred-fold." Of another man, he foresees that he is to prosper in his herds and flocks; his blessing, therefore, is that his cattle may increase abundantly: Thus regulating his blessing by the foreknowledge he has of things to come. According to this opinion, whatever is irreconcilable with the supposition that blessing is a mere prayer, is referred to its being, likewise, a prophetic prediction, and *vice versâ*. But, if this opinion is adopted, it will be needful to distinguish between the blessings pronounced by prophets and those pronounced by other pious and righteous men, who were not prophets; and it will also be needful to assign a separate class to the benediction which the *cohanim*, (sacerdotal race,) sons of Aaron, pronounced over Israel, and which did not contain any predictions whatever, although dictated by the Deity; and which, being prayers only, cannot be reconciled to the opinion which maintains that blessings partake of both qualities. It has likewise been held, that blessings, generally, are but prayers; but that Isaac, as a Prophet who could foresee the effects of his own blessing, became alarmed when he saw that Jacob would prosper so greatly above his beloved Esau. This view, however, is open to the objection, that, as Isaac knew the efficacy of his prayers, and had been tricked out of that benediction by his younger son, which had been intended for the elder, why did he not, in plain terms, pray that Esau might be more prosperous than Jacob? Or, if his blessing was prophetic, why did he not at once tell Esau, "You have lost nothing by my blessing being misplaced, as I did but foretell the future, which I can read, but not control?" This, indeed, he ought to have done, in order to prevent and obliterate the feelings of rancour and revenge which Esau would naturally harbour against his brother. Thus, whichever opinion is adopted of those we have enumerated, we still

meet with difficulties, which we cannot reconcile to our hypothesis.

According to our own opinion, blessings are prayers only, invoking the Divine favour on the head of an individual, but not at all predicting future events. The favour which is implored, and which emanates from the Deity, is bestowed on such recipients as are, by a previous life of virtue and piety, prepared, and, in some degree, worthy that it should be bestowed on them; but when the recipient is not properly prepared, or worthy of the Divine favour, the virtuous and pious man who invokes the Divine goodness, by bestowing his blessing, becomes the means of extending the favour of the Deity to the subject of his benediction. For this purpose it was that the person blessing put his hand on the head of him whom he blessed; so that he became, as it were, a conductor, to draw down the Divine favour, and lead it on to him whom he blessed. But, even in this case, the recipient must, at least, not offer any impediment, by vicious or impious conduct. In support of what we now assert, we find it related in Holy Writ, that "the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua, the son of Nur, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him: And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: And give him a charge in their sight: And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim, before the Lord: At his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him: And he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation. And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses." (Numbers xxvii. 18—23.) The extent of the Divine favour is

according to the capacity of the person who confers, or who obtains, the blessing; which is likewise to be inferred from the Sacred Scriptures, where we read: "And it came to pass when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." (2 Kings ii. 9, 10.) Elijah said, "Thou hast asked a hard thing," because it is impossible that a man should bestow on another more than what he has got himself; therefore, he continues: "If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so with thee." As there can be no doubt but that, after I am translated, my qualification and gifts will greatly excel what they are at present, if you see me after this increase of my gifts I shall be able to comply with your request, and bestow on you what I have myself; but if you do not see me, I can only bestow on you what I now have, and no more. And that Elisha did see Elijah after his translation, is proved by the fact, that, while the latter only performed eight miracles, Elisha performed sixteen.

This laying on of hands exercises its influence according to the degree of preparation and moral aptitude of the person blessed, as we find that Jacob laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, and his left on that of Manasseh, because the former, although the younger, possessed a greater degree of moral fitness; the blessing of Jacob would therefore obtain for him a greater emanation of the Divine favour than for his elder brother, who was not so eminently qualified by moral preparation, and on whom Jacob laid his left hand. Therefore also the *cohanim*, (priests,) when they blessed the assembled multitudes of Israel, spread their hands over them: For, as it was impossible that they should lay their hands

on every individual of so numerous an assemblage, the raising and spreading of their hands over the whole congregation implored the Divine benediction on every individual, according to his degree of moral fitness and preparation, and of which benediction they, in a manner, were the guides and channels, as is every righteous and pious man who invokes the Divine favour for another.

Nor must it appear strange to our readers that the blessing of a pious man, who perhaps is himself in want of the necessities of life, and dependent on charity for the scanty morsel which sustains him, should be the means of procuring prosperity, and the Divine favour, to another: For though Providence may, for one or other of the reasons which we have already enumerated, permit a pious man to be afflicted with poverty, and oppressed by want, still the efficacy of his prayer remains unimpaired, and his own moral aptitude becomes an instrument for conducting the Divine favour to another, who is less perfectly prepared or worthy to be its recipient: And therefore it was that Isaac became so greatly alarmed when he discovered that his benediction had been improperly obtained, and granted to a person for whom it was not intended: For he knew the power and efficacy of his own prayer, and therefore he said, "Yea, and he shall be blessed."—Having once invoked the Divine mercy in his behalf, such is the efficacy of my prayer, that what I supplicated is granted, nor can I undo what I myself have done. And accordingly Isaac concludes by saying, "I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given him for servants, and with corn and

wine have I sustained him, and now what shall I do unto thee, my son?" (Genesis xxvii. 37.)—The consequences of my blessing, which I cannot recal, are such, that thou and all thy relatives must bow to him who, through my blessing, is raised to be your superior. My prayers have endowed him with prosperity: The earth and its richest produce are to promote his happiness. And now, as I cannot take from him what my blessing and intercession have bestowed on him, what can I do for thee, my son, as the fulness of Divine favour and benediction is through my means poured out on him? And when Esau reminded him that the efficacy of his prayer being such as he described, he could, if he would, once more supplicate the All-bounteous Dispenser of every good, and says, "Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father," (Genesis xxvii. 38,) and Isaac did, in compliance with his request, invoke the Divine favour on Esau; still he did not in any thing impair or countermand the efficacy of his own prayer, but so regulated himself, that, while he bestowed his benediction on his elder son, according to the degree of moral aptness and preparation of which that son was possessed, he fully confirmed the blessing pronounced on his younger son. Therefore he says, "Behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother." (Gen. xxvii. 39, 40.) This blessing, while it answers to the desires and habits of Esau, sensuality and violence, confirms the blessing of Jacob, and seals his supremacy.

(To be continued.)

III. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 272.)

R. BARUCH died about the year 1126. His associate, R. Joseph,

survived him by fifteen years. Among the pupils of the former, his nephew

R. Abraham ben Dior, the historian, merits our best thanks, as it is to his *Annals* we are chiefly indebted for our acquaintance with the men and events of those days. He tells us, that, immediately after the death of R. Joseph ben Megas, a cruel persecution raged against the Jews. We do not know the first cause of the rigour with which they were treated by the Arabs, who till then had so greatly befriended them; but we surmise that it was owing to the misrule and anarchy which at that time exhausted the Moors of Spain, who, torn to pieces by intestine dissensions, were unable to maintain themselves against their Christian neighbours in the peninsula; so that these gradually reconquered what at once they had lost. Cordova, the principal city of the Moors, was alternately possessed and plundered by the various competitors for sovereignty. One of the African chiefs, Abd-almumen, thought that the decay of the Islam, and the laxity of faith among the Moors, were the causes of the internal and external misfortunes which at that time befel them. He therefore determined, not only to re-establish rigid adherence to Islamism amongst its professors, but also to compel the Jews to embrace its doctrines. Many died for the sake of their faith, others concealed themselves, and perished for want of proper food. Many fled to the Christians, whose obvious policy it was to receive and shelter every malcontent who quitted the Moors. Great numbers of Jews were, by Abd-almumen's commands, sold into slavery; but few withdrew from, and abandoned, their community; and even these returned again with the restoration of peace and better times. The persecution lasted near twenty years, but was fortunately confined within the narrow limits of Abd-almumen's sway; at whose death it ceased entirely, and the Jews gradually resumed their former position throughout Moorish Spain.

The successor of R. Joseph ben Megas, as president of the Spanish schools, was R. Jacob ben Sahal, the author of several hymns, and famed as a great Talmudic teacher.

He was followed in his office by R. Jose ben Zadok ben Zadik, equally celebrated as a philologist, a poet, and a Talmudist. He had been a disciple of R. Baruch ben Alkali, but was obliged to save himself by flight to escape martyrdom when Abd-almumen commenced the persecution of the Jews.

Among the many distinguished men of that period, we must mention R. Moses ben Jacob ben Ezra, and R. Abraham ben Chijah, as astronomers. The latter, in particular, is greatly celebrated as having, even in that remote age, proved the absurdity of astrology, and as the author of remarks on the System of Ptolemy. As a lawyer, we must mention R. Ephraim, a pupil of R. Isaac Al-phet. He wrote in defence of the Al-pheti, which had been violently assailed by a learned Frenchman, R. Serachja, of Lunel. The former, however, by his intimate acquaintance with Rabbinical law, perfectly vindicated the fame of his great teacher, and established his work as an authority which, since then, has been universally acknowledged. R. Ohab ben Meir ben Stormikos, although not an author, nor a very learned man, was one of the principal promoters of learning. Being immensely rich, and possessed of corresponding influence, he made it his study to forward the welfare of his brethren; and, as he well knew that, in their particular situation, it was solely by means of superior knowledge and superior virtue that they could overcome religious prejudice, he endeavoured, by founding and endowing schools, and extending his liberal patronage to every deserving object, to promote and encourage the spread of knowledge amongst his people, as the only basis of their safety and social consideration. He resided at Cordova, and died about the year 1150.

The school at Lucena was, as we have already stated, the nursery where the greatest men among the Spanish Jews were reared. And by a singular coincidence that school produced, as contemporaries, or in immediate succession to each other, the greatest poet, the most lucid commentator and philologist, and

the most profound philosopher, who, since the dispersion, have adorned the Jewish name.

The first of these was R. Jehuda Hallevi, born about the year 1100. of rich and pious parents, and descended from a family celebrated for its virtue and learning. Gifted by nature with uncommon abilities, and educated in the paternal home with the greatest care, he came to the school at Lucena at a time when R. Joseph ben Megas, and R. Baruch ben Albali united their transcendent talents, and in friendly emulation strove to initiate their disciples into every branch of knowledge and learning which the age afforded. No one profited by their instruction more richly than R. Jehuda Hallevi. Alike proficient in Rabbinical and profane learning, the philosophy of the Greeks and the science of the Arabs were as familiar to him as the pages of the Talmud, and the sayings of the *tannaim*. But while the book Cuzari, of which he is the author, affords a splendid testimony to the profundity of his reflections, and extent of his knowledge, it is as a poet that he stands unrivalled, and excels even the greatest of his Spanish predecessors. The endeavours of R. Salomon ben Gabirol to instruct his brethren by means of melodious verse, and to imprint a knowledge of, and feeling for, their duties on their hearts and minds through the aid of sublime poetry, and lofty odes, had been interrupted by his untimely death. Others, whose names we have mentioned, continued his efforts, with a greater or less degree of merit and success; but none among them all equalled his fame and abilities, until R. Jehuda Hallevi, whose masterly productions were universally allowed to excel even his great prototype. Having determined to communicate to his people the vast and valuable stores of knowledge which his mind had treasured up, he chose to follow in the footsteps of R. Salomon ben Gabirol, and to make the soft flow of his poetry the pleasing instrument for instructing his nation. His great wealth afforded him leisure to revise and polish his poems,

and to give them the highest degree of perfection which the contemporary laws of prosody enabled him to bestow. And as he was by nature gifted with an ardent mind, and a brilliant imagination, and had fully seized on the poetic spirit of the Hebrew language, he was enabled, to use the words of a contemporary critic, "to leave all other Hebrew poets far behind him, and to exhaust the fulness of poetic treasure. His odes abound in loftiness and fire; in his elegies a strain of soft melancholy, and tender lamentation, seizes on the soul, and compels the sympathetic tear to flow; his similes strike the mind by their appositeness; his style by its clearness, and the lucid arrangement of his subject; and on every line he writes, the most sublime philosophy, the most profound knowledge of the world and of mankind, and the most ardent love of truth, have stamped their impress; so that he satisfies every demand which can be made on the poet." *

In order to judge of the value which ought to be attached to the opinion of this critic, and to give a sort of bird's-eye view of the then state of poetry amongst the Jews, it may perhaps not be improper to state the demands which this critic makes on the poet, § all of which, according to his views, R. Jehuda Hallevi has satisfied:—

"1. The poet is to abstain from every barbarism of expression, and to maintain his language in the highest state of purity. If he neglects this, he resembles the Greek-Jews, who disfigure the purity of their poems by mixing Greek weeds among their Hebrew flowers.

"2. He must pay strict attention to the metre, so that his syllables be not sometimes long, and sometimes short, without any attention whatever to quantity; if he neglects to observe this, he resembles those modern poets who, ignorant of the art of versification, sometimes lengthen, and sometimes shorten, their lines in the most irregular manner, pro-

* Alcharisi in Tachchem, c. iii. written about the year 1210.

§ Ibid, c. xviii.

ducing verses which grate on the practised ear, and afford no pleasure to the common reader.

"3. The subject of his poem must be fixed and uniform, worthy of the poet's ardour, and instructive to mankind. The Babylonians write verses which, on account of their frivolity, are altogether worthless.

"4. The poet must write in a clear and lucid manner, free from every kind of obscurity or confusion of language. The French Jews write with such total disregard of perspicuity, that their poems require commentators to expound them, and their meaning is lost to the general reader.

"5. The poet must be a perfect master of the language in which he writes; and as he must, in no case, sacrifice sense to sound, so must he likewise be most careful not to violate the rules of syntax, or offend against grammatical correctness. The great fault of the Jewish poets of Damascus, is, that they altogether lose sight of grammar and correctness of expression. Among these Damascene scribblers, there is one R. Isaac ben Baruch, whose poems are in manner composed of broken, disjointed fragments, and form nothing but patchwork; they are like chaff without corn: His idiom is barbarous, his flow of language resembles bitter waters, his poetic ardour chills the mind of the reader with its icy influence, his heroes are cowards, his men are women, and his saints debauchees; every line is faulty. He relied on the opinion of his flatterers, although they were not capable of judging whether he rejoices or weeps, whether he sings or brays.

"6. The poet must not submit his labours to the world in a crude and imperfect state, but must previously bestow the greatest attention on revising and correcting what he has written. Nothing is more ridiculous than to present the world with the untimely abortions of a hollow brain.

"7. Nor yet must he force all that he has written on the attention of his readers; he must exercise both taste and judgment in selecting the best only, as fit to meet the public eye; as he cannot expect that all his

writings should be equally perfect, and most necessary.

"These seven points are the prime requisites on which the poet must fix his mind. He must remember, that he submits his works to all classes of readers; to laymen in the poetic art, as well as to learned connoisseurs. It must, therefore, be his object to satisfy the general reader, by the elegance of his language; the learned, by the value and importance of the subject on which he writes; and the connoisseur, by strict attention to correctness and the rules of art. The poems of R. Salomon ben Gabirol are, in part, open to censure, because they only satisfy the learned, but leave the mind of the general reader unmoved."

These sound views of the critic entitle his opinions to the greatest deference; and as he is, by far, more sparing of his praise than of his censure, the unqualified commendation he bestows on R. Jehuda Hallevi must have been the result of a strict and impartial examination of his works. We of the present day may, perhaps, have occasion to find fault with the too frequent play upon words in which R. Jehuda Hallevi indulges, and which, in some degree, detract from the pure beauty and sublimity of his diction; but when we come to make some allowance for the taste of the age in which he wrote, we find how greatly he, in every respect, surpasses his contemporaries, both Jews and Christians. And it must be a subject of pride and satisfaction to the Jews as a nation, that, at a time when the brilliant genius of poetry seemed quite extinct, they can produce at least one name, who must, by universal consent, be allowed to be a true poet.

In the book *Cusari*, which he wrote in the Arabic language, his object was to defend the Rabbinical view of the Jewish religion against the attacks and objections of Moslems, Christians, and Karaites. In order to render the manner in which he treats his subject more agreeable to the general reader, he mixes it up with an historical fact, the conversion of Bulan, king of the Chasars, to the Jewish faith. He introduces a Rabbi who is consulted by the

doubting monarch, and who, in a series of animated conversations and arguments, explains to Bulan the Jewish ideas of God, of Providence, and of the Divine government. In these conversations, all the objections that can be urged against the Jewish faith, and religious doctrines and observances, are freely brought forward, and forcibly put, by Bulan, but are refuted by the Rabbi, in a most clear and convincing manner. The whole book goes to prove that all the doctrines of the Jews, their customs, and ceremonies, are perfectly reconcilable to human reason; and that all their peculiar and exclusive observances which the Jews have adopted, serve but to maintain and confirm them in those religious principles, which, being alone worthy of the Deity, should be universally embraced by all mankind.

This truly great man shared the fate of his predecessor in the poetic art, R. Salomon ben Gabirol, and, like him, met with an untimely death. In his fiftieth year he undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, at that time in the possession of the Crusaders. His object was to satisfy the cravings of his heart, which urged him to visit the land of his fathers. He had composed a most beautiful elegy on the fall of Jerusalem, which has been adopted into the ritual for the anniversary of the destruction of the temple; * and his ardent

mind left him no rest till he recited his poem on the very ruins over which it wept. He accordingly departed for the holy city, where the devastation he beheld all around him, the barrenness of the once-fruitful soil, the solitude of the once-populous cities, the wretchedness and misery in which his brethren groaned under the iron sway of barbarous fanatics, made a deep impression on his sensitive mind. When he came in sight of Jerusalem, he tore his garments, pulled off his shoes, and, barefooted, with ashes strewed on his head, he commenced singing his elegy. Altogether absorbed by his subject, he noticed not that his singular behaviour had attracted the attention of an Arab horseman. He heard not the loud scoffing with which this cavalier bade him desist from his discordant lament. Enraged at the obstinacy of the Jew, who heeded not his repeated commands, the rude Arab spurred his horse against the unfortunate Rabbi, who expired under the hoofs of the animal, which trampled him to death.

He left his numerous and valuable writings to posterity, and they are still held in the highest estimation. His only daughter was married to the celebrated Aben Ezra, a near relative of R. Jehuda Hallevi, as both descended from one grandfather, and were the sons of two sisters.

TRANSLATION.

* ציון הלא השאלי את שלום

אסיריך &c.

"Zion, wilt thou not inquire after the fate of thy captives?" &c.

(To be continued.)

IV. CUSTOMS AND OBSERVANCES OF THE JEWS.

תשעה באב, THE NINTH DAY OF AB.

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.

EVERY nation records in its annals seasons of great public calamity and suffering, times when the scourge of affliction weighed heavily on the land, and days when the Divine justice exacted the penalty of crime and misconduct. But these unfortunate events live but in history; the generation by whom they are wit-

nessed may preserve the memory of what it has undergone; but their children, and still more their grandchildren, have no sense of sufferings which they themselves have not experienced: National pride forbids to keep alive the recollection of national humiliation; while the anniversaries of glorious victories, and

other happy events, are celebrated with joyous pomp; while vanity delights in the splendid commemoration of events, which bear testimony to a nation's prowess and success, no attention is paid to the anniversary of a humiliating defeat. No one thinks of commemorating events which wound the pride, and humble the vanity, of an entire people. Thus, while the victor triumphs in the recollection of his success, the vanquished obliterates the stigma of his discomfiture from his mind; and the searcher after truth is compelled to examine the pages of history in order to arrive at a knowledge of events, which, though perhaps recent, are by common consent consigned to oblivion.

Such is generally the case with every nation: The only exception to the rule is formed by the Jews. Singular in all things, distinguished from those among whom they dwell by their religious tenets and observances, they alone perpetuate the memory of their disasters, and, in each revolving year, mourn their defeat, and the loss of their national independence, as fervently and as sincerely as the survivors of that dreadful catastrophe,—who had endured all the horrors of war and famine which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, and all the sufferings of slavery by which that lamentable event was followed,—could possibly have done.

Should the reason be asked, why the Jews alone keep alive the memory of events which must be humiliating to their national pride;—why they alone renew the painful and debasing recollection of their defeat and subjugation;—why they are not satisfied, like other nations, with consigning the harrowing tale of their disasters to the guardianship of history, but mark the anniversary of such fatal occurrences in a manner which must renew the impression on the minds of every succeeding generation:—Should these questions be asked, we answer, "The reason is two-fold, and founded on the particular character and situation of the Jewish people."

The first is, that the Jews, the chosen people of God, who were under the immediate and direct guidance of His providence, whom the Lord had liberated with a strong hand and an out-stretched arm, from the land of Egypt; in whose favour He had inverted the order of nature, by leading them through the waters of the Red Sea, and providing them in the barren desert with food from heaven; whom He himself had planted in the land which He had vouchsafed to promise unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, their fathers: The Jews,—to whom the Lord had given a code of laws so perfect, so well calculated to secure the happiness of the nation, and of every individual member in it, and to procure for them political power and influence, founded on the admiration and respect of their neighbours; that it could be by their own fault alone, if ever their happiness was interrupted, and their peace and tranquillity disturbed;—that these Jews, for whom the Deity had done so much, could not, and would not, have been expelled from their land unless they had offended the Deity and incurred His wrath by their sinful violation of his sacred commandments. This was the true cause of their disasters, their defeats, and their final subjugation. And as they could not feel proud of their conquests and of their victories, because they well knew that neither their own valour, nor their own prudence and skill, was the cause of their success:—As the Sacred Singer justly remarks, "For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them:" (Psalm xlv. 3:)—Their vanity was not affected by their defeats, which they equally well knew that no valour, skill, or prudence of their own could avert; for an unerring authority had told them, "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and statutes which I command thee this day, that all

these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them." (Deut. xxviii. 15, 23.) As therefore they had no just cause to indulge their pride in the commemoration of fortunate events, their vanity cannot be mortified by the recollection of disastrous occurrences; but in either case a nobler sentiment animates their breast. When they rejoice on the anniversaries of any signal mercy or deliverance vouchsafed unto them by the Deity, it is not to offer incense at the shrine of national pride, or to boast of their might and prowess, but to express their heart-felt and sincere gratitude to their great and glorious Deliverer. And when in sackcloth and ashes they fast and mourn on the anniversaries of grievous calamities which have befallen them, their sorrows are not wrung from them by mortified vanity or humbled self-conceit; but it is the memory of the grievous sins which led to their fearful punishment: It is the recollection of their base ingratitude towards their Supreme Benefactor, of their foul and unnatural rebellion against his will and commandments, which weighs them to the earth. It is the trumpet voice of conscience which thunders in their ears the fearful denunciation of their God, "If you will walk contrary unto me, then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins; and I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant." (Leviticus xxvi. 23-25.) It is heart-felt penitence which extorts from them the confession that the judgments of the Lord are righteous, and that the punishment which He inflicted on them, however grievous, does not exceed the measure of their iniquities. Such are the motives which combine to form one cause why the Israelites renew the sense of past suffering on the anniversary days of public calamities.

The second reason is, that the Israelites, who had been constituted a kingdom of priests and an holy

people, and who, by their example, were to lead all the nations of the earth to a knowledge of the true God, were gifted with every needful means for giving due effect to their mission. For that purpose, the attention of all the neighbouring kingdoms was excited by the miraculous events which attended their exit from Egypt and their settlement in the Land of Promise. For that purpose, likewise, the code of laws which the Deity was pleased to grant them, contained various ritual enactments, which prescribed and established numerous sacrifices and offerings. But these sacrifices they were not to bring except in one place only: As Holy Writ commands, "When ye go over the Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety: Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there: thither shall you bring all that I command you—your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord. Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest: But in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, and there thou shalt do ALL that I command thee." (Deuteronomy xii. 10, 11, 13, 14.) This place, rendered sacred by the choice of the Deity, and in which alone all the commandments of the Deity could be obeyed, was the temple of Jerusalem, which was sanctified by a visible sign of the Divine presence, as the Sacred Scriptures inform us: "And it came to pass when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord: so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." (1 Kings viii. 10, 11.) And again: "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offerings and the

sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house: And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord." (2 Chronicles vii. 1—3.) And well they might praise the Lord: for no other earthly temple has ever been so highly favoured by the Deity as that His visible presence should sanctify and approve the rites and worship performed in that temple. No other system of faith has ever been authenticated in the fullest and most convincing manner, as was done at Jerusalem in the presence of the assembled multitudes of Israel. No other place on earth does therefore, in a religious point of view, possess that universal importance, as the hallowed spot where the שכינה, or visible presence of the Deity, dwelt on the mercy-seat between the cherubim. This great importance is confessed by all believers in revealed religion. To Christians and Moslems, Jerusalem is an "holy city," as well as to us Jews. Sanguinary wars have been carried on between the adherents of these two religious systems for the possession of a city which both considered alike sacred. There is scarcely an inch of ground in and about Jerusalem which has not been saturated with the blood of its defenders and assailants: And even now, after a lapse of centuries, when the fervour of enthusiasm has subsided, which opposed Europe to Asia in sanguinary conflict; when feelings more akin to the sacred spirit of religion, and the dictates of reason, are gradually gaining ground among mankind, cold indeed must be the heart and mind which can contemplate Jerusalem, the cradle of religion, the seat of the living God, the favoured spot which He deigned to sanctify with a visible sign of His presence, without profound feelings of reverence and awe, and without dropping a tear at the change from what once it was, to what now it is.

But if such are the reflections and

feelings which Jerusalem in its present state calls forth from those who are not descendants of Jacob, to whom the "land flowing with milk and honey" had not been given as an inheritance; who are not, and never can become, heirs to the promises which the grace of the Most High attached to that land and city,—if such are their feelings, what must be the sensations which animate us Jews when the thought of Jerusalem, and the Holy Temple, in ruins through our sins, and those of our ancestors, presents itself to our minds? Other nations have been conquered, other cities have been destroyed; but their calamities were but passing events. The conquered either recovered from their defeat, or amalgamated with their conquerors; the cities were either re-built or forgotten: But we Jews still stand alone; our city, never to be forgotten, still lies in ruins; the temple, in which the worship of the Supreme Ruler of the universe was approved by his presence, lies in ashes; on its site the fanatic disciples of an impostor have presumed to rear a fabric of their unhallowed devotion; while we, exiled, scattered over the habitable globe, offer to all the nations of the earth the spectacle of our punishment, and of our penitence; of the just effects of the Divine wrath, and of our submissive resignation to the chastisement which His paternal hand inflicts upon us. But, resigned though we be, though we submit without a murmur to the decree which His justice has pronounced against us, yet we cannot forget, that there was a time when His mercy had raised us as high as His offended justice has at present sunk us low; we cannot forget, that we once possessed a city, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." Like the inspired Psalmist, we are forced to exclaim, "If I forget thee, Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning! If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!" (Psalm cxxxvii. 5, 6.) For when Jerusalem was lost to us, when its holy temple was destroyed, we lost all that could be most dear to us as a nation, and as individuals. The land which the Deity himself had be-

stowed on our fathers, the inheritance which should have descended from them to us, the city in which our kings ruled, and inspired men prophesied, the tombs of our ancestors, liberty, independence, national existence, and that respect and honour to which the citizens of an established commonwealth are entitled, were all lost to us when Jerusalem fell; exile, captivity, scorn, oppression, and obloquy have, since then, been our portion. When we reflect on all this, and, still more, when we are forced to confess that "we have sinned and committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, who spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth to thee, but unto us confusion of face, as at this day: To the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee." (Dan. ix. 5-8.) When these reflections present themselves to our minds, and this confession is wrung from our hearts, have we not cause sufficient to mourn, and to keep alive the memory of the calamities that befel us on this fatal day? For we cannot be mistaken as to the cause why all these grievous misfortunes have befallen us: For by a coincidence which we dare not call accidental, it was on the ninth of Ab that "all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night: And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron." (Numbers xiv. 1, 2.) On the same ninth of Ab, nine centuries later, Nebuchadnezzar, with sacrilegious hand, presumed to burn and raze that temple where the living God had proclaimed his presence.

On the samenth of Ab, Jerusalem, trampled in the dust, and the flames of the second temple, lit by the savage bands of Titus, fulfilled the prediction of the prophet, That Zion shall be "ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high place of the forest." (Micah iii. 12.) And when, half a century later, the Jews, deceived by the pseudo-Messiah, Bar-Cosiba, attempted to shake off the Roman yoke, it was again, on the ninth of Ab, that their last place of refuge and strong-hold Bether, was stormed, and the blood of six hundred thousand victims glutted the inhuman vengeance of Hadrian. But this coincidence is not the only proof which we have that the calamities of the Jews were ordained by an especial providence and judgment of the Deity. When we open the Sacred Volume, we read: "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth; as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand: And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down in which thou trustest throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land which the Lord thy God hath given thee: And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee." &c. (Deuteronomy xxviii. 50, 52, 53) Who that is at all acquainted with the history of the final destruction of Jerusalem, but must confess that these fearful denunciations, pronounced nearly fifteen hundred years before the event occurred, have been strictly and literally fulfilled? The very nation which was to inflict these horrors on Israel is pointed out; for the eagle, as is well known, was the ensign and standard of the Romans. And what reader of the pages of Josephus can forget the heart-rending fact, that, during the famine at Jerusalem, a mother consumed her own infant, as had been predicted?

(To be continued.)

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VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 277.)

EVERY thing is foreseen, though freedom (of choice) is given: The world is judged in goodness: And all depends on the quantum of (good) works. (III. 21.)

COMMENTARY. *Every thing is foreseen*—After R. Akeba has proved to us how dearly mankind is beloved by the Deity, since they are all made in the image of God; and how supremely beloved are the Israelites, since, not only are they called "sons of the Most High," but to them and their guardianship has been confided the delectable instrument with which the world was created;—which the *tanai* does prove, in order to refute the mistaken opinions of those who are mentioned by R. Eleazar Hamodai, as holding the human race in contempt, breaking the covenant of our father Abraham, and expounding the law contrary to its true sense: *—After having given us these proofs, our teacher next proceeds to instruct us in those mysteries of the Divine government, and in those principles of faith, which cause unreflecting men to go astray, and, in their thoughtless hurry, to form and propagate erroneous opinions; and he avails himself of the opportunity to explain his preceding maxims.

Before we offer our commentry on this saying of the sage *tanai*, we must premise, by observing, that we are perfectly aware of the exposition of this *Mishna* given by that great and immortal teacher Rabenu Moses

ben Maimon (Maimonides). He says, that "R. Akeba in this maxim intends to teach us, that, although the Deity is possessed of perfect prescience, and absolutely foreknows every event that can and will happen; nevertheless, his foreknowledge does not engender predestination, and does not influence the action of man, who is gifted with perfect freedom of choice to do what is right or what is wrong, good or evil. That these two contradictory axioms are both equally true, however irreconcilable they may appear to human reason; and that the causes why we cannot comprehend or conceive how the apparent contradiction involved in these two axioms is to be reconciled; is evidently the weakness of our limited faculties, which, from their final nature, are incapable of defining the operations and influence of infinite knowledge.* This illustration of the great *Rambam* is true in itself and every way worthy of his great learning, profound philosophy, and heartfelt piety: But, with due submission to his high authority, we are of opinion that our teacher does not here intend to enter into any such abstruse speculation; but to afford us a lesson of practical morality. The luminous commentator, Rashi, (R. Salomon Jarchi,) expounds

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., p. 100, *et seq.*

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. I., p. 369, and Vol. II. p. 54.

this maxim by saying, "Every thing is known unto Providence: Even man's most secret actions, in the inmost recesses of his chamber, are not concealed from the Deity." The fact conveyed by this explanation is certainly true, but it assigns a wrong sense to the word צפוי, which is the future, as, לִלְבֵּי, "*to be published* to all the nations." (Esther viii. 13.) The meaning of our teacher is not merely that things are seen by Providence as they happen, but before they happen. While grammar is thus opposed to the limitations conveyed by Rashi's explanation, reason maintains that it cannot have been the intention of R. Akeba to enter into the abstruse speculation which Maimonides infers from this maxim: As it is not likely that our teacher should attempt, by his authority, to support the truths of the Holy Writ: For the fact, that every thing is foreseen by Providence, is frequently expressed by the Sacred Scriptures: As for instance: "This people will arise," &c.; (Deut. xxxi. 6;) and again: "Behold a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name," &c.; (1 Kings xiii. 2;) with many other pointed and absolute predictions, which fully prove the Divine prescience: And that freedom of choice is given to man, is expressly declared in the law: As it is said, "See, I have set before thee this day, life and good; and death and evil: In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, that thou mayest live and multiply: And the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it: But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I denounce unto ye this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither thou passest over the Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: **THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE,** that both thou and thy seed may live." (Deut. xxx. 15-19.) And in

the prophets we read, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isaiah lv. 1.) In the first of these quotations, by placing the alternative before the Israelites, and inviting them to choose the good, Holy Writ affords us the fullest assurance, that it depends upon man alone to select his path of life, and that he is free and uncontrolled in his choice, be that choice for good or for evil. And in the second quotation, the Sacred Scriptures place before us the consoling proofs, that even after we have chosen the bad, and have departed from the line of virtue and our duty, it rests with ourselves alone to retrace our steps, and, by sincere and heartfelt penitence, to return to our God. These principles are inculcated in so many other passages of Holy Writ, that our limited space forbids our quoting them. Thus the facts of which our teacher's maxim is composed rest on the authority of Scripture: And we cannot suppose that R. Akeba intended to explain and reconcile to us what appears contradictory in the two axioms of Divine prescience and human volition, since he left the question exactly where and as he found it: Nor that he wished to impress them upon our minds as principles of faith, since that would have been a work of supererogation, as he could add nothing to the authority of Holy Writ, which inculcates them.

The subject of Divine prescience and human volition, has, on another occasion,* likewise been treated of by Maimonides in nearly the same words; and he is justly taken to task by the Rabad,|| who comments "on his

* Eight Chapters of Ethics, chap. viii.

|| R. Abraham ben David, of Pasquieres, in France, a contemporary of Aben Ezra and Maimonides: the latter of whom he on one occasion censured as a young man, too bold, both in his opinions and expressions. He flourished about the year 1170, and was at the head of the schools of Southern France; and enjoyed the highest distinction, on account of his great learning, deep piety, advanced age, and immense wealth.

starting a question, to which he gives no satisfactory answer, further than invoking the aid of faith, to which he refers the matter: And that, therefore, he would have done better to leave at rest a subject which only creates doubts, unsolved by his attempted explanation." These remarks, addressed by the Rabad to Maimonides, would, with equal and greater force, have applied to our *tanai*, R. Akeba, the son of Joseph, (of blessed memory,) if we assume that Maimonides was correct in making him enter into speculation on an abstruse question of metaphysics. We therefore again, and notwithstanding the profound veneration we entertain for Maimonides, and the deference due to his great authority, repeat, that R. Akeba intended to give a practical lesson, but by no means to enter into abstruse metaphysics, on which the great teachers of Israel were not in the habit of speculating, either in the Mishna or the Talmud; as they well knew that man's reason was insufficient and incapable to grasp subjects altogether beyond its reach; and which, indeed, were never intended to be made the subject of human investigation: As Holy Writ declares, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? It is deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." (Job xi. 7—9.) And again, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord: For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah lv. 8, 9.) Accordingly, the whole Mishna, מסכת אבות, "ethics of the fathers," does not contain one single metaphysical speculation, beyond the reach and grasp of human reason; nor does our teacher depart from this general rule in his present maxim: But, having told us, in his preceding maxim, that the universe was created by means of a delectable or precious instrument, absolutely good in all its parts, he continues to

tell us, that the same absolute good pervades all the works of the Lord; which is apparent, not only from the creation itself, but also from the system of Divine government which rules that creation. This practical lesson he divides into four parts, which combine to attest the goodness of the Supreme Being; while each part separately is intended to shield us against some pernicious heresy and error, asserted by one or other of the infidel sects, of which R. Eleazar Hamodai has treated in his Mishna.

With these intentions, our teacher tells us, Every thing is foreseen: Every human action and sublunary event is foreseen by the Deity, from its commencement to its termination, and with all its approximate and remote consequences. Not according to the fatal error of those who say that it is beneath the Divine dignity to take cognizance of terrestrial events; and that, while His glory overspreads the heavens, He disdains to look down upon the earth. Nor yet according to the wicked presumption of those who say, "How doth God know? Can He judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to Him, that He seeth not: And He walketh in the circuit of heaven." (Job xxii. 13, 14.) Nor yet according to the stupid infatuation of those who say, "The Lord will not see, nor the God of Jacob regard it." (Psalm xciv. 7.) Whosoever entertains opinions, pernicious, wicked, and infatuated, like those we have here enumerated, is mistaken. Every thing is foreseen by, and known to, the Deity: As the Sacred Singer declares, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there: If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." (Psalm

exxxix. 7—12.) The Prophet takes care to instruct us in the name of the Deity: "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins," &c. (Jeremiah xvii. 10.) And again, "Can any man hide himself, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. (Jeremiah xxiii. 24.) As He, the Creator of all hearts, knows his own work, it lies open and displayed before Him whose glance penetrates the universe: And though, as the Prophet says, "His eyes are too pure to behold evil, and He cannot look on iniquity;" (Hab. i. 13;) nevertheless, "Hell and destruction are open before the Lord; even so are the hearts of men." (Proverbs xv. 11.) And though fools, who, when they see that the wicked man prospers in this world, are thereby tempted to imitate his wickedness, endeavour to silence their own conscience, which reproaches them for their evil deeds, by saying, "The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth;" (Ezekiel viii. 12;) they are greatly mistaken: their apparent impunity,

the manner in which they are, undisturbed, permitted to pursue their iniquitous career, does not arise from the indifference with which the Deity treats the actions of man, or from His altogether disregarding and being ignorant of sublunar events; but it furnishes the fullest proof of the Divine goodness, and that God is long-suffering: He governs His creatures with mercy and forbearance; and grants the sinner time and opportunity, that he may repent and turn from his evil ways, while yet in this world, and before he is summoned to appear before the dread tribunal of the All-just. Let not man, therefore, lay the flattering unction to his soul, that in whatever he does he can escape that all-seeing eye which encompasseth the universe; or that his most secret thoughts and deeds are not known and foreseen by Him before whom, hereafter, he is to answer for the use or abuse of that perfect and uncontrolled freedom which has been entrusted to him.

(*To be continued.*)

To the Editor of the Hebrew Review.

THE following Translation of "An Essay on the Poetry of the Jews during the Middle Ages," by the celebrated orientalist, Professor Munk, at Paris, cannot fail to contribute to the propagation of a knowledge of Hebrew literature among our Jewish brethren of England; and in this view I offer it for insertion in the columns of your valuable Review.

M. H. B.

28, *Bevis Marks*,
August 4th 1835.

II. HEBREW POETRY OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

FROM the borders of the Indus, to the Straits of Calpe, from east to west of the then known world, the enthusiastic, and for a time victorious, shout, "There is no God but Allah, and Mahomet is his prophet," resounded during the middle ages. Almost simultaneously the banner of the Islam was reflected in the waters of the Marmorean sea,* and floated over the tented plain of Tours;|| and at both places a terrible

conflict for the empire of the world was raging between the crescent and the cross. Centuries had elapsed since the flock of Moses had been removed from the field of battle: While the Roman emperors had been persecuting the Christians, as a Jewish sect, both religions were victims to the same proscriptions; but when, at length, the daughter ascended the throne of the Cæsars, she favoured not her aged mother, for whom the days of Nero and Hadrian were not yet by-gone. Then the Rabbies cast a farewell glance

* 714. || 732.

on the sacred abodes and 'tombs of their ancestors, and carried their grief to some retired spots of Persia and Syria, where they soon concentrated all their energies in the study of their literature. All was not lost to them,—the Holy Scriptures were still in their hands. Anxiously they pore over these dear relics, saved from the wreck of their nationality; they diligently count the books of the Sacred Canon, and in each book they mark the chapters, and in each chapter the verses, and in each verse they number the words, and in each word the letters, and for each letter they invent a vowel-sign, and at the end of each book they record, "This is the number of chapters, verses, words, and letters contained in this book," lest their children lose a particle of this precious treasure, whence they should gather solace in the tribulations of the present time, and hopes for the future. Thus we see them occupying their moments, embittered in every other respect, while the sanguinary strife in which the sectarians of the Gospel and Koran exerted all their vital strength, left our forefathers time to follow this favourite pursuit. Besides, the Israelites looked fearlessly upon the gigantic strides of the Moslems: Their every hope had been blighted by the Christians, and they hailed the increasing lustre of the crescent, by which they expected to be salutarily affected. The Jews who had settled in Spain, and were curbed down under the insupportable yoke of the Visi-Goths, favoured with all their might the progress of the Saracens; And they were not disappointed; for when the growing prosperity of the Hagarenes raised in them the want of civilization, the Jews did not a little contribute to their instruction: partly, by making them acquainted with the sciences of Greece; and partly, by opening to the Mahometans the rich treasures of Jewish national erudition. An intimate connexion soon subsisted between the Mussulmans and the Jews: The Rabbinical schools in the east followed in many instances the fraternal call of the Jews in Spain; and we see them in Cordova, the

modern Athens, honourably vying with the Mahometan academies. In the course of time the beautiful Arabian language almost entirely expelled the Chaldee from the Rabbinical schools; the lively feelings of the Hebrews could not remain insensible to the beauties of the Arab tongue, nor to the poetical achievements of that people. The Arabs were exceedingly fond of versification; but in their verses there is no breath divine, no expression of magnanimity. Almost all other, even idolatrous nations, called their inspirations from above. The gods of Meron breathe the divine thought into the souls of the adorers of Brahma; in Greece they turned their eyes towards the Olympians; the Singer of Sion, more sublime than all, hears "the heavens relate the glories of the Invisible" But the Bedouin is alive to no enthusiasm, save that of egotism and vain glory; and Mahomet himself, when he startled the sons of the desert from their drowsy contemplations, by pointing at a paradise replete with pleasure, and a place of punishment full of dread, instead of opening a wider sphere to the expanse of their poetical feelings, he shuts them out, on the contrary, from the field of poetry; for, according to him, it is impossible to produce verses superior to those brought him by the angel Gabriel. Still the Arabs possessed, during their epochs of glory, many poets, who applied their chief study to the structure of their stanzas, to prosody, and rhyme, and who only merit consideration for having ably displayed the riches of their vernacular tongue. For ages the Rabbies, in their productions, sadly neglected the Biblical language; their works abounded in Chaldaisms, grammatical faults, and corrupt Hebrew. But all at once a spirit of reform came over the Rabbies; they were ashamed of allowing the Arabs so dear a preference, and they made great efforts to restore the Hebrew then used, to its native purity; still they could not avoid intermixing many of the subtleties invented by Arab grammarians. They fettered the soaring genius of their writers by rules too rigid—particularly by

adapting to their own, which consisted altogether of no more than about six thousand words, the strictness barely applicable to the rich Arab language. Still, the good effects were immense, which their endeavours produced on the Hebrew students, whose admiration of the Arabs had been carried to the baneful extreme of creating a contempt for the Bible. The Rabbi Al-Charizi complains bitterly of the corruption arising from the levity with which the Jews had left the language of their forefathers, in order to offer incense to strange gods. He says, "A feeling of jealousy, but not of the ignoble kind, seized my soul, when I saw wisdom turning away from us; when I beheld the lovely children, the fruit of Hagar, and compared them with the sterility of Sarah." Then, according to the words of this Hebrew poet, Sarah, hitherto simple and chaste, decked herself out with all the worthless pomp of Hagarene ornaments,—alliteration, assonance, rhyme, and prosody, with all the niceties of its Arab appendages; in short, the whole formidable retinue which attended on the Mussulman style are forced upon the language of the Hebrews. It is true, the Rabbies were very happy in their innovations; but this is the very reason why the greatest part of the productions of that epoch offer so many difficulties to the translator. In the original, they never fail to excite the respect of the reader for the able manner in which the Rabbies of those days surmounted the greatest obstacles in style and representations. But, to read them, it suffices not to know Hebrew; it requires a perfect knowledge of the sacred text, on account of the frequent allusions made by those writers to passages from every part in the Scriptures; whereas, the Arab writers of the same date but rarely quote verses from the Koran. Not all the writings of that school, however, are encumbered with the trammels of pedantry. From time to time the voice of the Hebrew was heard in his own natural accents; and, in those moments, feelings of ardour and magnanimity force their way through forms and restraints.

The more the Rabbies ennobled

their sentiments in the sublime regions of philosophy and science, the more loudly did they express plaintive regret at their lost independence; and repeated persecutions pressed from their wounded hearts many a dolorous cry. The poets among the Hebrews of the middle ages found in their sufferings that sublime inspiration which characteristically distinguishes them from Arab writers: Their elegies, bearing the very hue of melancholy; their prayers and odes, breathing the most pure sentiments of religion, and a touching resignation; their lessons of morality and wisdom, gathered amidst tombs and ruins, will find a responsive echo in every feeling heart; for they contain thoughts and emotions fit for every land and every age. The following few verses are the contents of a poem composed in those times, and since received by all Jewish communities as one of the elegies to be chanted in the synagogues on the ninth of Ab, in mournful remembrance of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar which catastrophe furnished the melancholy subject:—

"For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water." (Lament. i. 16.)

"Alas! these sacred ruins are the effects of our crimes, which we expiate this day by torrents of tears; and every year I give vent to my pain in lugubrious wailings.

"My heart is broken. For me no comfort lives.

"Where is there a suffering equal to mine? O hear the dreadful tale of two scions of Aaron, whose memory consumes my bosom like a devouring fire! and every year I give vent, &c.

"Two lords among the strangers had carried away as captives the son and the daughter of Ismael, the High-Priest. One of the strange lords said to the other, 'Among the captives of Zion, I have chosen a maiden clad in purple, bright as the moon, handsome as Kezia and Jemima.*' 'And I,' replied the other, 'arrive from the conquest of Jerusalem, where I won a bright-eyed

* Daughters of Job.

slave, glittering like the sun in the middle of the horizon. Let us join the handsome couple; they will give children whose beauty will excel the brilliancy of the stars.' Still those words ring in my ears: O, see my affliction, see my torn vestments; for every year I, &c., &c.

"Both lords consenting, shut up their captives at eve in the nuptial chamber. The virtuous couple feel the agony of fear. O night of mourning, when the hymeneal torch was quenched in tears!

"And the betrothed youth sighs, 'The descendant of Aaron, shall he embrace a slave?' And the daughter of Jochabee, desolate in grief, exclaims, 'Shall I clasp a bondman to my breast? If the Lord of heaven has pronounced this decree, then stay, ye spheres, your celestial accords, and join, with voices of terror, to my despair.'

"The dawn of morning found them thus: They glance at one another, recognise their kindred features, and fly into each other's arms. 'Tis thou, my brother!' 'I have thee, my sister!' And their voices are choked; their hearts expand; their souls intermingle, and fly together to the regions of bliss.

"In a dark vision, the images of the two once appeared unto Jeremiah; and then the Spirit of Holiness said, in the words of the Prophet, 'For them I weep.' And every year Israel gives vent to their pain in lugubrious wailings."

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries Arab civilization arrived at its apogee; and this is also the epoch when the poesy of the Rabbies produced its fairest fruits. The youthful Salomon Ben-Gabirol excelled chiefly in the ode. His fertile muse sang the wonders of nature and the movement of the heavenly spheres. He left us in Kether Malchuth (royal crown) a poetical *Résumé* of the Aristotelian cosmology. The adoration paid to the Stagirite in those days by the Arabian and Jewish schools is every where perceptible, and even when Ben Gabirol raised his contemplations to the God of Israel, he could not abstain from indirectly offering his homage to the idol of his age. As a specimen of

the ideas prevalent in his poems, we shall subjoin the following lines:—

"Chase thy cares from thee, my saddened soul! why should the adversities of this earth affect thee? Soon will thy frail envelope repose in the tomb, and all will be forgotten. Man is a vine, and death the vintner, who carefully watches the hour when the fruit is ripe for the knife. Time is short; the road is long: Forget thy troubles; think but of the grave; fear nought but the day of judgment."

Salomon fell at the blooming age of thirty, under the dagger of an assassin, who, according to general belief, was driven to this execrable deed by jealousy at the superior talents of his victim. Jehuda Hallevi, of revered memory, flourished immediately after him, and equalled his predecessor, not only in learning, but also in misfortunes. It would be vain to attempt describing the eulogiums heaped upon this pillar of Judaism, by the Rabbies, both of his days and of later ages. "He alone," poetically exclaims one of his panegyrists, "penetrated into the sanctuary of poesy. The gates of heaven had been locked by the guardian of the empyrean, but the genius of Jehuda boldly shattered their bars. How our souls are uplifted by the force of his prayers! His amorous songs flow like dew from his lips, and still throw fire into our hearts O, hear his elegies, and the cloud of your tears will drop down in torrents."

The languor which afterwards drove him to seek an untimely death in Palestine may be traced to his reverie on the ruins of Jerusalem, known under the title of "Sion," which has also been received in the number of elegies forming the ritual of the service of the ninth of Ab.

"Hast thou, O Sion, forsaken thy captive children? Art thou insensible to the fervent acclamations which the remnant of thy flock send towards thee from all the corners of the earth? From east, west, north, and south, exile and captivity direct their anxious looks to thee, pant for hope, and pay thee the tribute of their tears. Our tears fall rapidly like the dew on Hermon; O could

they water thy deserted hills ! When I weep over thy tremendous fall, it is like the howling of jackals ; but when I dream of the return from bondage, I hear the accents of the harp which in festive days accompanied our songs divine. My heart flies towards the house of God, into the presence of the Creator. Were not the gates of heaven opened here ? Did not the majesty of our God here darken the lustre of the sun and stars ? O that I might be permitted to send forth my soul where the Spirit of God descended upon his chosen ! Thou wert the residence of the eternal King, and now, Zion, behold ! slaves pollute the throne of thy princes !

“Why cannot my spirit hover above the sacred spots where the awful Deity appeared to thy prophets ? Give me but wings to carry the fragments of my heart to yonder ruins, and I would cling to thy dumb rocks ; my forehead would touch thy sacred dust in adoration. My foot would rest on the tombs of my ancestors ; I would contemplate the holy cave of Hebron ; my eyes would dwell on Mount Abarim, on Mount Hor, which cover thy sainted guides, the luminaries of Israel.

“In thy air I should breathe the breath of life, in thy dust I should inhale the perfume of myrrh, in the waters of thy streamlets I should sip the taste of honey. How should I delight in treading bare-footed the ruins of thy sanctuary, to stand still on the spot where the earth opened wide to receive in her trusty bosom the ark of the covenant with the cherubim. Ah, from my head I could tear the hair that ornaments it ! In my despair I could curse the decree which threw thy adoring sons on an unholy shore. How can I enjoy life, when I see thy lions dragged into dens by dogs ? How can I endure day-light, when it shows me ravens feeding on the mangled bodies of thy saints ? O, stay, cup of my sufferings ! but one moment let me repose, my veins are already filled with bitterness ! But one moment let me reflect on Ohola, (Samarra,) and I will grasp thy goblet ; but one thought on Oholiba, (Jerusalem,) and I will drink it

to the dregs. Zion, crown of beauty, remember the tender love of thy inhabitants ; thy happiness filled them with joy, thy reverses overwhelmed them with grief. From every recess of their prison they bend their hearts towards thee, and bow in prayer to thy gates. Fear not ; thy flocks, dispersed on the hills, have not forgotten their native fold ; they unceasingly languish for thy heights, yearn for the shade of thy palm-trees. What are Sincar and Pathros, in their empty greatness, compared to thee ? What are their deceiving oracles in the eyes of those who know thy Urim and Thummim ? Is there a mortal daring enough to enter into comparison with thy princes, prophets, Levites, and sacred singers ? All empires shall vanish and fail ; thou alone wilt stand unto the end of ages ; for thou art the dwelling of the Eternal Lord. Happy mortal, who could rest under the shelter of thy protecting walls ! Thrice happy mortal, who will be present at the dawning of thy renewed day ! He will mingle with the chosen of thy happy ones, he will be glad at thy rejoicings, and he will see thee in beauty as in the days of thy youth.”

Eleven hundred years had passed over the ruins of Jerusalem, when they inspired our poet with those sentiments of despair, and those hopes of a happier futurity. “Probably,” says Herder, “these ruins will still for centuries live in the memory of men ; millions will still there find types for true or imaginary consolation ; inspirations of love or hatred ; hopes, presentiments, prophecies ; for they are deeply rooted in the very heart of old Time, and claim their authority from the instructions of our youth and religion.”

An irresistible force drew the unhappy Jehuda Hallevi from the heart of Andalusia to the deserts of Palestine. One day he sat, lost in melancholy, under the ramparts of the holy city ; he loosened his sandals, tore his garment, and loudly recited his Elegy ; when an Arabian warrior came by the way, and wantonly insulted the harmless pilgrim. Jehuda was not to be interrupted by the in-

vectives of the barbarian ; without noticing the blasphemies of the Bedouin, he continued his contemplation in silence. The soldier, probably irritated at the stranger's imperturbable quiet, spurred his charger, and soon trampled on the mutilated corpse of Zion's mourner.

His son-in law, Abraham Ibn Ezra, is as justly celebrated for his numerous writings, as for his travels, and the manifold vicissitudes of his life. Besides his excellent and well-known Commentary on the Bible, there are various pieces of his poetry extant. The following remarks on the fluctuations of his fate may serve as a specimen of the hyperbolical language to be met with in the most elegant writers of that time : " If my tears flowed according to the immensity of my grief, no man could find a resting-place for his foot ; but as the covenant of the Lord rose above the waters of Noah, so He also showed a rainbow unto my tears."

Of this tenor are the major part of the poetical works of the Jews, during the age which forms the subject of our contemplation. We must not lose sight of the circumstance, that those were the gloomy days of the crusades, when massacres of the Jews were occurrences by no means unheard of. Hence the frequent mention of the tomb, as the last refuge for the outcast Israelite, who was at the mercy of every infuriated and fanatical rabble :

" Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away, and be at rest ?

The wild dove has her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country,—Israel but a grave!" BYRON.

Notwithstanding the clouds which so frequently darkened the horizon above the Hebrews, they did not forget the words of their Preacher : " There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh ; a time to mourn, and a time to dance."

At intervals the occasionally melancholy and generally grave Rabbies cast off their garments of mourning, and in festive robes they sing songs of love, they enliven their epigrammatic sayings by a play on words, and at times they even offer *facetiae* which the reader is astonished to meet with in the sacred tongue. The most prominent among the Arab Rabbins, whose works have been handed down to us, stands Rabbi Jehuda Al Charisi.* His *Tachkemoni*, written in rhymed prose, intermingled with verse, displays a curious *melange* of didactic, satirical, and facetious compositions. A part of that work is devoted to the history of poetry among the Jews, and contains hints for the art of versification. The number of poets whose names are held in honour among the Jews is not so limited as to allow us their enumeration in the narrow bounds we have prescribed to ourselves. It will therefore be our task to resume this subject in future, and particularly for the purpose of gathering a few remarks of the learned, on the more modern literature of the Jews.

III. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim : " BOOK OF PRINCIPLES : " BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 280.)

CHAPTER XX.

THE duty of addressing prayers, whether of thanksgiving or of supplication, to the Deity, is enjoined by the law of Moses : As our Rabbies say in *Siphri*, " To love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul." (Deut. xi. 13.) " To serve Him is to pray." Our Rabbies also

say in the Talmud, " Be as strictly observant of a minor precept as of a more important one ; for thou canst not know the reward apportioned to the performance of each precept." (*Nedarim*, folio 39.) But they do not intend to assert, that all the precepts of the law rank alike in importance, and in the quantum of reward that attends the performance of each commandment. Their maxim

is to be compared to the physician, who instructs his pupil, and says, "Be careful in the use of medicines." He cannot mean all medicines are alike in their power and effects; but that, as each medicine operates in a particular manner, and has its peculiar influence on the human body, the pupil must be careful properly to use every drug or herb of medicinal virtue; and this caution extends alike to those drugs, the force of which affects the whole human frame, and to those herbs, the more limited effect of which is confined to some particular part of the body. In this sense we must understand and explain the maxim of our Rabbies. All the precepts of the law are equal in one respect, inasmuch as they all emanate from the Supreme Legislator; they are, therefore, all, and without any exception, entitled to our best and most exact obedience: Therefore our Rabbies tell us, "Be as careful in the observance of a minor precept as of a more important one; for they all emanate from the same most high and glorious Authority." Nevertheless, as each commandment has its own particular influence and peculiar importance; and as it is but reasonable to suppose that the reward apportioned to the performance of every commandment corresponds with, and is commensurate to, the beneficial influence thereby exercised over the performer himself, and over others who are thereby affected, or the degree of self-denial and sacrifice of present enjoyment which that performance exacts; there can be no doubt but that some precepts and duties instituted by the Divine law are more important in themselves than others enjoined by the same authority; although, emanating alike from the Deity, all are alike entitled to our obedience.

Among the commandments which are important from their extensive and salutary importance, prayer holds a foremost rank; for not only is it—like every other duty enjoined by the law of Moses—a Divine institution, and, as such, entitled to its reward;—as we find that every precept secures a reward to its observer: Thus Holy Writ declares the reward of charity, "That the Lord thy God

may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest;" (Deut. xiv. 29;) and of the minor precept of the bird's nest, it is said, "That it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days;" (Deut. xxii. 7;)—but that reward is of the most comprehensive nature; so that prayer is thereby rendered efficacious under all circumstances. We find it efficient for the cure of diseases: As we read in the case of Hezekiah, "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying, I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came to pass afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turn again and tell Hezekiah, the chief of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears, behold, I will heal thee: On the third day, thou shalt go up into the house of the Lord." (2 Kings xx. 1—5.) Prayer is the only means to save us from death: As we read, when the Israelites had incurred the Divine wrath, by making and worshipping the golden calf, the Deity said unto Moses, "Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven." (Deut. ix. 14.) But Moses desisted not from his prayers, until he saved them from this imminent peril, and obtained their pardon from a merciful God. And when Jonah was in the belly of the fish, beyond the reach of human aid, his prayer ascended to the mercy-seat of the Most High, and saved him from impending destruction. Prayers are the only remedy against barrenness, as is proved by the case of Rebekah, when "Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: And the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived." (Genesis xxv. 21.) And of

Hannah, who likewise was barren, and who prayed fervently, we read, "And the Lord remembered her." (1 Samuel i. 19.) Prayer decides the fate of war: As we read in the matter of Sennacherib, king of Assyria: "And for this Hezekiah, the king, and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven: And the Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land." (2 Chron. xxxii. 20, 21.) Thus we find that prayer is efficacious under any circumstances, and availing in the hour of need, be that need of whatever description it may: And its influence will even produce contrary effects, according to the circumstances under which it is addressed to the Deity; for while Moses prayed, "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thy servants," &c.; (Exodus xxxii. 13;) Asaph, on another occasion, prayed, "O remember not against us former iniquities." (Psalm lxxix. 8.) So that prayer is equally efficient in the opposite requests of "remember" and "forget."

This universal influence is possessed by no precept, commandment, and duty, enjoined by the Divine laws, save and except by prayer alone: Accordingly, our Rabbies commented on the words of Holy Writ, "And ye shall serve the Lord your God," (Exodus xxiii. 25,) and remark: "The serving of the Lord here mentioned, does not consist of sacrifices and oblations, which can only be brought on one particular spot; but relates to that service which can be rendered every where." (Talmud, treatise *Babab Kamah*, folio 22.) And, as they cannot mean that species of service which an attendant renders to his master, since the Deity needs no aid or attendance from any one, the service acceptable to the Deity, and which man is in a condition to offer at all times, and in all places, is prayers of homage and thanksgiving; acknowledging that He alone is the Creator and Preserver of the universe, the great Source of every good, to whom our thanks are due for all His mercies: Or of supplica-

tion, when we pour out our hearts before Him in the humble confession of our failings, our wants, and necessities: And that all our hopes are centred in His goodness and His mercy. And what confirmed our Rabbies in the opinion, that the true service of the Lord is heartfelt prayer, is, that five promises are appended to this precept, each of which has been fulfilled through prayer. For Holy Writ says, "Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and He shall bless thy bread and thy water: And I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren in thy land; the number of thy days will I fulfil. I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come; and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee." (Exodus xxiii. 25—27.) "He shall bless thy bread and thy water," alludes to the efficacy of prayer in times of famine, as was exemplified by David. (2 Samuel xxi. 1.) "I will take sickness away from thee," as in the case of Hezekiah. "There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren in thy land," as in the case of Hannah. "The number of thy days will I fulfil," as in the case of Hezekiah and Jonah. I will send my fear before thee," &c., as was done to Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and his army.

This universal efficacy and general influence of prayers is asserted by king Solomon, who, at the inauguration of the temple, after having enumerated warfare and drought, concludes by saying, "If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever affliction there be; what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people, Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: Then hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest." (1 Kings viii. 37—39.) And that prayer is likewise efficacious to

redeem Israel from captivity is proved by their bondage in Egypt, when it is said, "And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God considered them." (Exod. ii. 23—25.) And also by the praying of Daniel and of Ezra, by means of which Israel were redeemed from the Babylonish captivity. Thus we find that in every case and to every man

prayer is availing; not to the Israelite only, but to the stranger, likewise, who pours forth his heart in humble supplication to the Lord of the universe: As Solomon said, "Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel," &c. (1 Kings viii. 41.) Nay, the confirmed sinner, who has been guilty of the greatest crime, may humbly approach the mercy-seat of his God, as we read of Manasseh, (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11—13,) and of Ahab. (1 Kings xxi. 25—29.) So that, however great a man's sins or calamities, let him humbly and fervently implore the mercy of his God, and he will find relief.

(To be continued.)

IV. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 284.)

R. ABRAHAM BEN MEIR ABEN ESRA was born at Toledo about the year 1120, and descended from an illustrious family, several members of which we have had occasion to enumerate among the Jewish worthies of Spain. He not only profited by the best instruction in the paternal house, and in the then celebrated school at Lucena, but, eager to acquire knowledge, by all means, he did not disdain the instruction of R. Japheth Levi, a learned Karaite, of whom he himself made the remark, that, as in former days, the learned *tanai* R. Meir had profited by the lessons of the notorious apostate, Elisha ben Abuha, retaining what was good, and rejecting what was noxious; so had he, (Aben Esra,) improved himself by the learning of the Karaite, without becoming infected by his heresies. The progress which Aben Esra made under his various masters was so rapid and astonishing, that not only did he surpass the greatest of his predecessors, but that, in every branch of knowledge known to his contemporaries, he held the very first rank. But immense as was the mass of knowledge and learning he had acquired, they were surpassed by his brilliant genius; and the solidity of

his judgment must excite our admiration in a higher degree than the extent of his studies. If any one of the Jewish writers deserves to be designated as *Hachacham* the sage, and as *Rabenu*, our teacher, it is Aben Esra, to whom these titles are pre-eminently due. He was a perfect master of the Hebrew and Arabic languages, both of which he treated as a profound grammarian and philologist. Intellectual and contemplative, he was a philosopher in the truest sense of the word; not fettered by scholastic trammels, he, more than any other of his contemporaries, kept aloof from the blind homage paid to the name of Aristotle, and stood independent, with the conscious dignity of superior merit. He advanced further than any of his predecessors into a true understanding of the Sacred Scriptures, of which he is the most luminous commentator, and the one whose explanations afford the greatest satisfaction, and carry conviction home to our understanding. As a mathematician and an astronomer, posterity owes him many valuable discoveries; and if he also wrote on astrology, that was a tribute to the spirit of his age, which even his powerful mind was not above paying,

But vast as is the fund of learning which we have enumerated, it is surpassed and obscured by the splendour of his genius, the brilliancy of his inexhaustible wit, and the agreeable flow of his diction, alike entertaining and instructive. To those, whose progress within the extensive range of Hebrew literature, has been but limited, and who are only acquainted with the deep seriousness which pervades all the writings of the Rabbies, it may appear impossible that wit or humour should preside over any of their pages. But Aben Esra affords us the proof, that even the important studies of Hebrew sages afford room for the graces; and that the force of instruction is not lessened by its being conveyed in an entertaining style. As he married the rich and beauteous daughter of R. Jehuda Hallevi, he thereby became enabled entirely to devote himself to his studies, free from the care of seeking either office or emolument, the fetters of which might have been burdensome to so free a spirit as his. It is related that he was indebted to his wit and talent for the possession of his lovely wife and her large fortune. R. Jehuda Hallevi, then upwards of fifty years of age, had fully determined on visiting Jerusalem, and the ruins of that sacred temple where his ancestors had ministered and worshipped. He had one only daughter, beauteous and accomplished, on the verge of womanhood, and sole heiress to his great wealth. His wife, after in vain exerting the persuasive force of female eloquence to induce him to forego his purpose, urged him not to depart without bestowing the hand of his daughter on some man worthy of possessing her heart and fortune. Her solicitations were so pressing, and so often repeated, that the impatient Rabbi, to get rid of her importunities, vowed that he would give his daughter in marriage to the first Israelite who, on the coming day, should present himself to him. On the next morning, Aben Esra, habited in his travelling dress, entered the school, and greeted R. Jehuda, who knew not his person, although his fame was already known to him. The hospitable Rabbi invited him to his

house; of which he desired him to consider himself an inmate. The wife of R. Jehuda started when she saw the young man, whose homely garb, and humble exterior, did not correspond with the expectations she had formed of a future son-in-law. R. Jehuda, soon discovered that the young man was gifted with natural abilities, and that in time, and with instruction, he would make great progress in learning. He therefore invited him to enter his school, and to become one of his disciples. Aben Esra, who perceived that his presence caused some constraint and embarrassment to the female branches of R. Jehuda's family, determined to conceal his name and talents, until he should ascertain the cause of an embarrassment which, as was but too apparent to his penetrating eye, was caused by himself. The wife of R. Jehuda, inconsolable at the failure of her ambitious hopes, once more exerted all the influence of her persuasive eloquence, to induce her husband to forego his determination of bestowing his daughter on the poor and illiterate youth, whose mental and corporeal wants were alike to be supplied by her husband's charity. She wept, she entreated, in vain; all that she could obtain from her husband was the promise that he would bestow his utmost care and attention on the young man's education; and not grant him the hand of his daughter, until he proved himself worthy of so precious a gift. Aben Esra commenced to learn the rudiments of the sciences under R. Jehuda, who soon expressed his satisfaction at his rapid progress. But while his apparent increase of knowledge thus gained the approbation of the father, his manly virtues, goodness of heart, and sprightly wit, did not fail to make a favourable impression on the heart of the daughter.

One evening R. Jehuda remained late, beyond his usual time, in his study: And it was only after repeated messages that he took his seat at the supper-table. Aben Esra, an inmate of his house, repeatedly inquired for the cause which had kept him absent, but only received evasive, though good-tempered, answers: until the wife of R.

Jehuda, rising from table, went to her husband's study, and returned with an Hebrew poem, which he had been writing, and the concluding lines of which did not please him. "There," she exclaimed, "if thou art worthy of being the favourite disciple of R. Jehuda Hallevi, complete what thy master has commenced." Smiling, Aben Esra took up a pen, and, after having perused the poem, and introduced some occasional corrections, he completed the last stanza in so masterly a manner, that R. Jehuda had scarcely seen it ere he embraced him, and joyously exclaimed, "Assuredly thou must be the famous Aben Esra, and most welcome art thou to be my son-in-law." The wife, happy at becoming the mother-in-law of a man whose fame already vied with his greatest contemporaries, gladly consented; and Aben Esra shortly afterwards celebrated his nuptials with the fair being whom he had gained by his talents, and merited by his virtues and amiability.

Some years afterwards he undertook a scientific journey through Europe, in the course of which he visited England, France, Germany, Italy, and Greece. At Rome, where he was received with the greatest respect, both by Jews and Christians, he made a prolonged stay, and profited greatly by the rich treasures of the Vatican library. He wrote several of his works there, particularly

the famous book **המאונ'י**, a grammatical work, written about the year 1167.

After having visited Greece, and sojourned some time at Rhodes, then the seat of a famous Jewish college, where he wrote his Commentaries on the book of Daniel; he visited Tiberias, where he held long and frequent conferences with the Masoretic sages. The result of these conferences was his Commentaries on the Pentateuch, a work in which the fulness of his grammatical knowledge, his intimate acquaintance with the spirit of the Hebrew language, the solidity of his judgment, and his acute powers of reasoning, combine with sincere piety, profound critical acumen, and a great love of simplicity; and furnish us with an exposition the most luminous, and a guide the most satisfactory and congenial to our reason, of all and any that have attempted to comment on Holy Writ.

After his return from Palestine, Aben Esra spent several years of his life in Italy, where he composed most of his works. Thus the Commentary on the Pentateuch was written at Lucca. The work **עבודת הלשון**, on "the Beauty of Diction," which, to the Hebrew student, affords the same aid and instruction as Quintillian does to the Latin, he wrote at Mantua, about the year 1172.

(To be continued.)

V. CUSTOMS AND OBSERVANCES OF THE JEWS.

תשעה באב, THE NINTH DAY OF AB.

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.

(Concluded from page 288.)

THE sieges of Jotopathia, Gamla, Giscala, and so many other cities, the fall of which preceded or followed that of Jerusalem,—cities fortified with the utmost care, and defended with the obstinate valour of despair,—confirm that part of the prediction which sets forth the system of defence to which the Jews would resort. But vain were all the efforts of their valour and skill: It

had been foretold that their high and fenced walls should come down; and down they did come, burying their hapless defenders beneath the reeking ruins.

It is not our intention to enter into a detail of the horrors which attended the destruction of so many cities, and the attempted extirpation of the Jewish people: The Talmud, in treatise *Tangnith*, the pages of

Josephus and of Tacitus, and the more modern works of Dr. Jost and Professor Milman, afford every information which the reader can require, respecting the lamentable history of that period of terror and of Divine wrath. To them we refer; and to their testimony, how truly the denunciations of offended justice have been executed, we can but add the humble confession, "The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against his commandment."

The destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jewish people, and their continued existence as a nation, notwithstanding every attempt to exterminate them, or to compel them to forego those religious tenets and observances which distinguish them from all other nations, are the most striking fulfilment of prophecy, and the strongest evidence in favour of revealed religion, which scepticism itself can require. In these prophecies there is nothing ambiguous, nothing uncertain: The date when they were delivered ascends to remotest antiquity; and even he who most strongly objects to the authenticity of the sacred writings is forced to admit, that, centuries before the Roman power had made any progress, or was at all feared, in Asia, the Pentateuch was familiar to the Jews; and that no material alteration has, for the last two thousand five hundred years, crept into its pages. So that the predictions which we have quoted, and which enter into so minute a detail of circumstances to come, as not only to point out the system of defence on which the Jews would rely, but also instances of individual suffering and despair,—such as that a delicate female should renounce the sentiments of nature and of her sex, and sacrifice her infant to appease the rage of hunger;—nay, the very nation by whose instrumentality all these horrors are to be inflicted is pointed out centuries before the existence of that nation is known to their intended victims; these are facts so stubborn, that the most confirmed infidel is compelled reluctantly to yield to their force; and though his pride forbids that he should own to others, that these facts carry conviction home to his benighted

mind, yet, within himself, the pangs of conscience wring from him the avowal, that no sophistry, no skill in dialectics, or efforts of reason, can shake the evidence which the literal fulfilment of these predictions affords of the truth of revealed religion.

To us Jews,—while the calamitous fate to which the Divine wrath has justly condemned us, carries grief and penitence to our hearts,—the strict and literal manner in which the denunciations of Divine justice have been fulfilled, affords us a source of hope and consolation. It is related of the celebrated *tanai*, R. Akeba ben Joseph, that, as he and some of his disciples were passing the ruins of the holy temple, a jackal came out from the most holy part, where the glory of the Lord had formerly throned over the cherubim. His companions began bitterly to weep at the sight, while the Rabbi burst out into an exulting laughter. His astonished disciples exclaimed, "Rabbi, why dost thou laugh?" "Why do ye weep?" was his reply. "How can we refrain from weeping," answered they, "when we see the glorious and holy temple of the Lord in ashes, the idolatrous Heathen lording it over the ruins, and that most sacred spot, where the Lord of the universe deigned visibly to dwell,—that spot is now the abode of unclean animals? How is it possible that the eyes which see this destruction and desecration,—caused by our sins, and those of our ancestors,—should abstain from shedding abundant tears, or the oppressed bosom from giving vent to its poignant grief?" "Aye!" said the Rabbi, "the prophet said, 'The mountain of Zion is desolate; jackals walk upon it;' and ye weep because ye have seen this fearful denunciation fulfilled; but the same prophet has likewise said, 'Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-places; and the city shall be rebuilt upon her ruins, and the temple shall be restored to its former manner. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of re-

* Lamentations v. 18.

joining: And I will multiply them, and they shall not be diminished; I will glorify them, and they shall not be humbled.' Thus our happy restoration is foretold by the same authority which foretold our lamentable degradation. And when I behold how strictly and literally the denunciations of divine justice are carried into effect, I rejoice to think that the promises of divine mercy will not be less strictly and literally fulfilled."

Feelings similar to those which possessed the venerable Rabbi—at the sight of Jerusalem and its temple in ruins, and the prediction of its utter devastation, accomplished even to the minutest particular—fill the breast of every Jew; and even while he mourns the fall of Zion and the sorrows of his people, a ray of hope bursts through the cloud of grief; so that, even while he weeps, he feels that the day may not be far distant, when the mercy of his heavenly Father may issue the command, "Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem! Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion!" (Isaiah lii. 2.) The past is to him a warranty for the future. Therefore, when, on the anniversary of his calamities, he sits down on the ground, and reads the Lamentations of Jeremiah, those beautiful and heart-rending elegies, in which the inspired eye-witness of the first destruction mourned the grievous fate of Zion and the holy temple; when from sun-set to sun-set he fasts, so that, parched by the burning rays of the summer sun, not one drop of water passes his lips to allay his thirst, or cool the feverish heat of his woe-worn body; when, unshaved and barefooted, he renounces every occupation save that of reciting the melancholy lines in which the poets of his people lament the fate of their brethren, and implore the mercy of their God; if such are the sad feelings which fill the breast of the man, and the impressive scenes

which sink deeply into the minds of the youth, on the mournful anniversary of Zion's destruction, the succeeding Sabbath hears him avow his confidence and hope in the promises of his God; and proclaim aloud the consolation afforded to him by the merciful assurance of the Lord of Hosts. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: For she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins:" (Isaiah xl. 1, 2.)

And while the pages of history record the murderous intentions of his nation's foes, defeated by the merciful interposition of Providence, thereby corroborating the assurance of Holy Writ, "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, for I am the Lord their God:" (Levit. xxvi. 45 :) And the declaration of their Sovereign Protector, "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed:" (Malachi iii. 6 :) While every day's experience proves to him, that, among all the wonderful events recorded in the annals of the world, none is so wonderful, so greatly surpassing the attempts of human power, and the calculations of human foresight, as the continued existence and preservation of his nation; which, though exiled and dispersed, persecuted and reviled, suffering and oppressed, often denied the most common rights of humanity, and still more often made the victim of ruthless fanaticism and bigoted prejudice: When he sees this, he feels that he and his are preserved for a purpose, and that purpose the promised restoration of his people; and though generations pass, and centuries elapse, his hope is still unshaken, for the Lord has declared, "I the Lord will hasten it in its time." (Isaiah lx. 22.)

* Jeremiah xxx. 18, 19.

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VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth* : "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

יין לבן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 292.)

EVERY thing is foreseen, though freedom (of choice) is given: The world is judged in goodness: And all depends on the quantum of (good) works. (III. 21.)

COMMENTARY. *Though freedom of choice is given*—Free-will is given to man by his Creator to do well or ill: As the Sacred Scriptures teach us, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." (Deut. xxx. 19.) As the inspired teacher of Israel, Moses, here most solemnly declares that the choice of good or evil, virtue or vice, rests entirely with man; and as, moreover, he assures them that the result of a good choice is LIFE, that future state of bliss, where the intellectual part of man, blessed by the approbation of the great Lord of all, lives in uninterrupted and unceasing felicity; no reasonable cause of doubt can or ought to remain in our minds, as to the perfect and uncontrolled freedom of will with which the Creator has endowed man. And in order to show, in its true extent, the effect and workings of this free-will, properly exercised, Moses, the man of God, adds, "Both thou and thy seed:" Not only will he whose life is virtuous and pious secure eternal felicity unto himself, but his pattern and precept will encourage good inclinations in the youthful minds of his offspring; so that they too "choose life," and transmit their bright example to their descendants.

This absolute and unrestrained

freedom was granted to mankind by the Creator, in order that man might prefer the good from conviction, and under the guidance of reason and purity of heart. Therefore, he is permitted to know evil, and to be strongly tempted by his corporeal desires; but these he is to overcome by the influence of reason and wisdom, the origin and foundation of which is the fear of the Lord. For this purpose man is not only provided with all the desires, wants, and inclinations of other animals, but he is likewise gifted with those superior intellectual powers that have not been bestowed on the brute creation, which, obedient to the force of instinct, has no freedom of choice; whereas to man an alternative is given in all things. Two ways are constantly open to him; and, uncontrolled, he may choose one or other. The inclinations which he has, in common with the brutes, and the passions which these inclinations, not restrained by instinct, engender, tempt him to do evil; the intellectual or superior powers, peculiar to his own species, urge him to do good: No external influence inclines the scale in favour of one or other of these contending principles; the impulse which decides the contest, and gives preponderance in his mind to good or evil, is altogether internal, and proceeds from his own will alone.

This freedom of choice bestowed

on mankind is a proof of the infinite greatness of the Deity. He permits a man to set at nought His holy law and commandments, and to throw off all obedience to the revealed will of his Maker. He suffers him to indulge in all the wicked propensities to which the rage of passion, or perverted imagination, impels him; but, though every thing is foreseen, and the wicked deed of the sinner is known, even before it is committed, his volition is not at all interfered with; and, however much he may be thwarted in the execution of his pernicious projects, his will, that inward inclination which urges him on and prompts him in his career of iniquity, still continues free and uncontrolled: Accordingly, our teacher tells us, that "every thing is foreseen, though freedom of choice is given." He does not invert the expression, and say that "freedom of choice is given, though every thing is foreseen," as it is his intention to direct our contemplation to the equanimity and forbearance of the Deity, who, though every thing is by Him foreseen, does nevertheless leave man's freedom of will unrestricted. Even before the sinner is born, before his participation in the general prerogatives of humanity has commenced, every step he takes in the path of guilt, every action that marks his advance in the path of iniquity are foreseen and known to Providence; but still he is permitted to exercise that freedom of choice which is the distinguishing preference of man above all other terrestrial creatures; for "the Lord is great and exalted:" "His ways are not like our ways:" "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts higher than our thoughts:" "For He is exalted in holiness." If this were not so; if the thoughts of the Deity were like those of man, and His feelings like ours; the result would be, that the Deity must hate sinful man, as we hate those who are at enmity with us, who thwart our wishes, and spurn at our commands; consequently, the wicked man would never be permitted to quit the maternal womb; but, as his wickedness is foreseen, and the power to anni-

hilate him rests with the Deity, he would be placed in the impossibility of doing harm, even as we would render our foes innoxious, had we the power. When, therefore, we see that the sinner grows and thrives, and is permitted, unchecked, to pursue his career, as his own free-will directs him, it proves to us that the Deity is not only exempt from any community of thought and of purpose with us, but that His bounty is inexhaustible and His mercy boundless; that, having once laid down rules for the government of His creation, and laws for the guidance and direction of man; and, having decided that man's obedience, in order to be meritorious, must be voluntary and flow from conviction; He does not enforce obedience, nor yet hate or destroy those who disobey Him. But having foreseen that mankind would produce righteous and wicked individuals, He permits both to pursue their respective courses, governing them and all His creation with that infinite mercy and goodness of which He alone, as the only perfect Being, is capable. For the Divine attributes which enter most into the government of the world are mercy, goodness, wisdom, power, and justice; and among these mercy and goodness take precedence. Therefore the Holy One (blessed be He!) does not hate any one of His creatures, not even the most confirmed sinner: therefore He does not destroy before his birth the evil-doer, whose career of iniquity is open and displayed before Him; but He permits him to live and to exercise that great prerogative which the Divine goodness has bestowed on his species: nay, His mercy affords frequent opportunity to the sinner to repent and amend, ere His justice enforces that responsibility which is inseparable from man's freedom of choice and volition. And so certain is it that the Lord does not hate, despise, or reject any one of His creatures; and, least of all, the intellectual beings whom He has placed at the head of His terrestrial creation; that whenever the words "hated, enmity, or contempt," are found in Holy Writ, applied by the Deity to men, even the most sinful, all

such expressions are merely similes used in order to convey to the human mind the conviction, that whereas certain actions would provoke hatred and contempt in man, who beholds them, those same actions will not escape the reprobation of Divine justice, which holds the free agent, man, accountable for his deeds. But these words are by no means intended to tell us, that such feelings are reconcilable with the Divine perfection, which extends its love to all beings: As the Sacred Singer emphatically declares, "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." (Psalm cxlv. 9.)

The world is judged in goodness—Our teacher having shown us that goodness and mercy are the first among the Divine attributes which govern the world, continues his instruction by telling us, that the same attributes likewise preside at the judgments pronounced against the world by the Divine justice, which is righteous, just, equitable, merciful, and long-suffering. He (blessed be HE!) does not weigh the actions of man, his sins and iniquities, according to His infinite greatness and dignity, which have been offended by man's violating His laws, and transgressing His commandments; for if the punishment were to be meted out according to that standard, mankind could not exist one instant before Him: As our Rabbies say, "Divine justice requires that the severest punishment should follow the transgression of every Divine command; for the veneration and obedience due to the Supreme Legislator are such, that the soul which violates His laws should surely die:" But His mercy is extended to all His creatures: All His ways are righteous; and therefore He judgeth not man by the standard of His own offended dignity, as strict justice would rigorously exact; but, tempering His judgments with mercy, He considers man's actions according to their nature, and assigns that punishment which His wisdom and equity deem proper. If, in the execution of this decree, man is visited with affliction, and the chastisement, which is his due, weighs him to the earth, his

sufferings are not inflicted out of vengeance, or out of hatred; but, in his greatest affliction, the Divine mercy is still displayed towards him, to reclaim him from his evil practices, and by transient calamities to enlighten his benighted soul, and prepare it for everlasting bliss. Thus the very punishment inflicted by the Deity is a token of the Divine love: As Holy writ declares, "Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth." (Proverbs iii. 12.)

And all depends on the quantum of (good) works—"The merit which man is to derive from his works does not result from his having once performed a good deed, but from the proper spirit by which he is animated, and which induces him on all occasions to do what is right and proper: So that the quantum of his good deeds exceeds and preponderates over his transgressions." Such is the explanation which the great Maimonides, and the learned R. Obadiah Bertinora,* and of some other commentators of this treatise. The Rabbi Isaac Abarbanel differs from their opinion, and offers an illustration, which, though most ingenious, is too lengthy for our limits. We therefore refer to that learned author's "Commentary on *Aboth*," while we proceed concisely to state our opinion:—

We say, then, that the words, "All depends on the quantum of works," have no reference to the good or evil deeds of man, but relate to the manifold works of the Deity; all of which evince His mercy and justice, and proclaim His goodness to be the preponderating principle which governs the universe: And as all his works are permanent, as the Psalmist says, "For ever, O

* This great commentator of the Mishna, born at Bertinora, in Italy, towards the middle of the fifteenth century, resided at Zapheth in Galilee, where he died about the year 1530. His numerous works are held, in high estimation. It is related that his brother, a trader at Venice, whose property never exceeded 3000 Venitian ducats, (about £400) used to allow him the greater part of his own earnings, in order that he might direct his whole attention to his learned pursuits, free from want or domestic cares.

Lord, thy word is settled in heaven : thy faithfulness is unto all generations ; thou hast established the earth, and it abideth ; " (Psalm cxix. 89, 90 ;) and the laws which He has laid down for their governance are immutable : All nature, and the uttermost bounds of creation, material as well as intellectual, afford so many standing proofs of His power, wisdom, mercy, and goodness. Our teacher, in his concise, and even somewhat obscure, style, intends to tell us, that every thing throughout creation depends on those attributes by means of which רוב המעשה, "the multifarious works of the Deity," have been called into being. And as all these works act in the fullest accordance with, and obedience to, the divine will ; they form an example which man should, in all things, strive to imitate : It is in this sense that the Psalmist says, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all ; the earth is full of thy riches." (Psalm civ. 24.) And again, "Many, O Lord, are thy works which thou hast done. My God, thy wonders and thoughts to-

wards us cannot be reckoned up in numbers unto thee : If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." (Psalm xl. 6.) His meaning is, "Numerous are the wonders of thy creation throughout the universe ; these are thy instruments of reward to the righteous, and of punishment to the wicked. They all obey the laws which thy wisdom has assigned to them ; but thy miraculous deviations from these laws have been on behalf of us Israelites, to whom thy laws have been imparted. To them thy mercies have been extended more abundantly than to all other nations of earth ; therefore they are, above all other men, bound to worship thee in gratitude and love, and to obey thee with unlimited devotion, and perfect harmony of soul and body ; so that their performance of thy laws, statutes, and commandments may be as constant and undeviating as that of the various parts of thy creation, which swerve not from the path thou hast traced out for them.

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim : "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES : " BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 300.)

CHAPTER XXI.

WHILE we are on the subject of prayers, there is one difficulty of so important a nature, that we cannot forbear devoting our attention to the attempt of removing the doubts thereby cast on the efficacy of prayer.

The greatest mortal name recorded in Holy Writ is that of Moses, the faithful servant of the Lord, the father of all the prophets, the trusty messenger through whom the divine laws were imparted to Israel. Yet this great and pious man prayed most fervently to be permitted to enter the promised land, but prayed in vain : As Holy Writ relates, "And I besought the Lord at that time, saying, O Lord God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand : For

what God is there in heaven or in earth that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might ? I pray Thee let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, this goodly mountain and Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me : And the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee ; speak no more unto me of this matter." (Deut. iii. 23-26.) Thus it would appear, that what has once been decreed, cannot be recalled or set aside through the influence of prayer ; that, consequently, it is in vain that we supplicate the Deity, or implore his mercy, since what is once decreed is irrevocable. To this we reply, that prayers are assuredly most efficacious before the doom has been decreed and pronounced by the Divine Justice.

Prayers are likewise availing after the decree has been pronounced, unless the decree is confirmed by an asseveration: Accordingly, our Rabbies say, "Prayer is availing both before and after Divine Justice has pronounced its decree." (Talmud, treatise *Rosh-hashanah*, folio 17.) Their assertion is confirmed by the history of Hezekiah, king of Judah: For after the Divine decree had not only been issued, but communicated, to him, his prayers obtained a respite for him: As we read, "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death: And the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amos, came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live." (2 Kings xx. 1.) And a little further on we read, "Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayers, and have seen thy tears: Behold, I will heal thee; on the third day shalt thou go up unto the house of the Lord," &c. (verse 5.) Thus, although the decree was positive that he should "die and not live," still his prayers were availing, and caused the revocation of his sentence. But the decree pronounced against Moses was accompanied by an asseveration: For the words of Holy Writ are, "Therefore shall ye not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." (Numb. xx. 12.) On which our Rabbies remark, "The word לִכְּ, 'therefore,' is an asseveration, or affirmation; in which sense it is used on another occasion: לִכְּ, 'and therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli,' &c. (1 Sam. iii. 14.) And, accordingly, the prayer of Moses our teacher could not prevail against a decree confirmed by so strong a declaration. For this is the difference between the prayers of, and the decree against, an individual or a community: That the doom pronounced against the former is irrevocable, if confirmed by an asseveration; whereas, the sentence against a community may be recalled in consequence of fervent prayers, uttered by themselves or on their behalf." (Talmud, treatise *Berachoth*, folio 34.) In order that these remarks of our Rabbies may be properly understood, we

will attempt to explain the chapter of Holy Writ* in which this prayer of Moses occurs; and point out the connexion which exists between the different parts of this chapter.

Moses begins by saying, וְאָתַחֲנִן, "and I besought," on which word our Rabbies remark the word חָנִּן, "to beseech," in all places applies to מַתְּנַת חֵן, "a free gift," or "unmerited grace;" an opinion founded on the etymology and affinity of the words חָנִּן and חֵן. This word Moses uses to teach us that man should never insist on his good deeds or merits when supplicating the Deity: For in another part of the Sacred Scriptures Eliphaz justly remarks, "What is man, that he should be meritorious? and the born of woman, that he should be righteous?" (Job xv. 14.) And our Rabbies blamed Hezekiah, because, in his prayer, he pleaded his own merits, and said, "I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." (2 Kings xx. 3.) Therefore, they say, the very message which assured him that his prayer was granted, conveyed to him the humiliating reproof, that the efficacy of his prayer was by no means owing to his own worth and merits: As we read, "I will add to thy days fifteen years: And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hands of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake." (2 Kings xx. 6.) But Moses, our teacher, did not advance his own merits as a sufficient reason why his solicitation should be granted, but implores the undeserved grace of the Deity. And he continues, "Thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand." Such has ever been thy unmerited goodness towards me; for of thine own accord, and without my deserts, didst thou let the inspiration of thy Sacred Spirit rest on me, and appointedst me to be thy prophet and messenger, although I was unworthy of a mission to which I did not aspire. This our explanation is

* Deut. iii. 23, *et seq.*

in accordance with the opinion of our Rabbies in *Siphri*, where they say, "The words, 'thou hast begun to shew' refer to the beginning of Moses's legation, when, without any previous preparation or intention on his part, he was induced to say, 'I will now turn aside, and see this great sight,' &c. (Exodus iii. 3.) Moses commenced his prayer, as it were, by saying, "Lord of the universe, let it not displease thee that I pray thee to extend thy mercy unto me of thine own free grace, and although I am unworthy; for thou hast accustomed me to implore thy unmerited bounty ever since thou didst begin, in the burning bush, to bestow thy free grace upon me, though undeserving: And as on that occasion thou wert gracious unto me beyond my merits, even so be now merciful unto me beyond my deserts." (*Siphri*, chap. iii.) He then continues, "I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land," &c. This prayer is like that of David on another occasion: "Save us, O God of our salvation." (1 Chron. xvi. 35.) Because thou art the God of our salvation, therefore save us. And Moses prayed, "Because thy free grace has hitherto been extended to me, therefore grant my prayer, and in mercy permit me to go over," &c. This prayer is as if Moses expostulated with the Deity, and said, "What can prevent thy granting my prayer? The death decreed against me must be owing to one of these causes: 1. That it is a punishment inflicted by thee on account of my sins: 2. Or pre-ordained in accordance with the planetary influence on the ordinary course of events: 3. Or the time is come, when, having reached the utmost period during which my soul is to inhabit its tenement of clay, I must die." These three periods appointed to man's life, and one or other of which is the cause of death to every one, are enumerated by David, when, speaking of Saul, He says, "Either the Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into battle and perish." (1 Samuel xxvi. 10.) The first is punishment inflicted by the Deity; the second is natural, and at the appointed time; the third is

untimely, when man perisheth without having committed any particular crime, or sin, which calls for so severe a punishment; and without having reached the full period of his years, but in consequence of the planetary influence exercised on the general course of events, or of a general decree, which dooms to death every one who enters into a certain battle, and there occupies a certain station: But from the effects of which decree, whosoever avoids going into that particular battle, is exempt. There is a fourth cause of death, namely, his own will, when man prefers to die rather than to live. Of this kind was Saul's; of whom it is said, "Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it." (1 Samuel xxxi. 4.) But this last, which is sinful in the extreme, as spurning the choicest gift of Providence, is not enumerated by David; nor was it mentioned by Moses, whose supplication, according to our Rabbies, continued to urge, "If my death is decreed as the punishment of my sin, is that sin so great that it cannot possibly be pardoned by thee?" Cain had used language nearly similar, when he said, "My iniquity is greater than can be supported:" (Genesis iv. 13:) On which our Rabbies comment, "Cain said, 'Lord of the universe, thou that endurest heaven and earth, is my sin past all possible endurance?'" (Talmud, treatise *Sanhedrin*, folio 101, and *Erubin*, folio 15.)

The meaning of their commentary is, that Cain said to the Deity, "If my sin is so completely beyond the reach of pardon, then man's power of sinning exceeds the divine power of forgiveness," which is altogether impossible, as the divine power knows no limits and cannot be surpassed. And when Moses addressed his prayer to the Deity, he dwells on the divine greatness and power by saying, "Thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand." As I know that thy greatness is infinite, how can it be possible that my sin should be so exceedingly great as to be beyond the reach of thy pardon? And should my death be owing to planetary influence, thy hand has already

so often and so variously displayed its might, that I full well know the planets and their influence, like every other part of creation, are subject to thy power, and submissive to thy will: "For what god is there in heaven or in earth that can do according to thy works and thy might?" Should my natural term of life be expired, so that my vital powers are exhausted, and those fluids on which vitality depends are absorbed, thou who art omnipotent canst renew the strength of my manhood, and restore me to my pristine vigour; and, if such should be thy pleasure, there is no one who can gainsay thy will. As thus there is and can be no positive obstacle to impede the exercise of thy mercy, "I pray thee let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, this goodly mountain and Lebanon." To these urgent supplications the Deity replied, "Let it suffice thee: Speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes, for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see." Let it suffice thee that thou hast been deemed worthy to bring my people thus far; thy successor is already appointed; and though thou shalt be favoured with a sight of the land they are to possess, yet it is not thou, but thy successor, Joshua, who shall put them in possession of their inheritance. Moses concludes the narrative of his ill success, by saying, "So we abode in the valley opposite Beth-peor." It is here that the divine decree is to receive its execution; therefore I found it impossible for me to proceed any further; for this spot is destined to be my tomb, and here my mortal pilgrimage must end: As Holy Writ relates, "And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor." (Deut. xxxiv. 6.) With this remark he dismisses the subject of his own sin and punishment; and, resuming

the thread of his discourse and exhortation, he proceeds to say, "Now, therefore, hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments which I teach you for to do them, that ye may live and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you." I wept and prayed in vain: To me it is not given to see that good land which you are about to take possession of; but ye who are so highly favoured, and who will obtain what is denied to me, be ye careful to obey the Lord your God in gratitude and love. And if ye should say, "Even as thou didst sin and wert not forgiven, so that thy prayers remain unheard, we may, likewise, chance to sin beyond pardon, and not enter into the land of promise," I answer, "You have seen what the Lord did because of Baal-peor; for all men that followed Baal-peor the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you. But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day. For what nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for." Think not that my case and yours are similar or parallel; for though I am possessed of good qualities, yet I am but an individual, and my prayers in my own behalf will not prevail against a decree pronounced and confirmed by the Divine justice; but ye, although ye were idolaters, and guilty of the most heinous offence in the sight of the Lord, still, as ye are an entire community, my prayers on your behalf were accepted, and ye were forgiven; for both when ye made the golden calf, and, subsequently, when ye worshipped Baal-peor, I prayed for you, and my prayers on your behalf obtained your pardon, although my supplications for myself remain unheard. On this passage our Rabbies remark in *Siphri*, "The sin which the Israelites were guilty of with Baal-peor is mentioned by Moses, in order to point out to the Israelites the great distinction in favour of the prayers of an entire community; for, though their supplications be of the same nature, and at the same time, as those of an individual, the former

will be heard, although the latter may not. And, therefore, Moses adds, 'For what nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for,' to tell them, that whatever an entire community prays for will be granted to them." (*Siphri*, chap. iv.) This lesson is likewise conveyed by our Rabbies on another occasion, when they say, "Man should at all times join his soul to the devotion and

prayers of the congregation, for the prayers of the many are not rejected." (Talmud, treatise *Berachoth*, folio 5.) Their intention is to teach us that though the decree pronounced against an individual, and confirmed by an asseveration, cannot be revoked through the prayers of that individual; yet a similar decree against a community may be set aside by their prayers. This explains to us why the prayer of Moses on his own behalf was not granted.

(*To be continued.*)

III. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(*Continued from page 302.*)

ABEN ESRA enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing his merits acknowledged, and his fame firmly established, even during his life-time. Wherever, in the course of his extensive travels, his arrival was expected, the members of the Jewish communities assembled; and, preceded by their chiefs, received him with all due honour. As long as his stay continued in any place, the most learned men of the congregation thronged to his dwelling, in order to profit by his instruction. And not the learned alone; but his extreme goodness of heart, brilliant wit, lively conversation, and affable condescension, rendered him a favourite with all classes; so that, long after his death, those who in their infancy had, with a word or look, been noticed by him, erected that notice into the trophy of their after-days, and boasted of their acquaintance with Aben Esra as the most important and felicitous event of their lives.

But the highest and most precious testimony of his great talents, and the importance of his writings, is afforded to Aben Esra by his great contemporary Maimonides; who, in a letter to his son, R. Abraham, directs the attention of the youthful student to the writings of Aben Esra, of which he says, "And thou, my faithful and obedient son, I command thee, that thou shalt not fatigue thy understanding with the voluminous

works of commentators: The only commentaries I wish thee to read, and diligently to study, are those of Aben Esra, which, like all his writings, are most valuable and useful to whosoever studies and understands them; for his works require diligent reading, profound meditation, and persevering assiduity; but they richly deserve the labour that is bestowed on them; for profound and extensive knowledge is the reward which they dispense to him who makes himself master of the precious stores with which they abound. I myself confess that I am deeply indebted to Aben Esra for the light which, through his aid, I have obtained, and the clear view which he has given me of many obscure passages in the Sacred Scriptures. Do thou, my son, therefore, devote thyself to the investigation of his writings; for he was animated by the same spirit of truth as our father Abraham; and, though his language is purposely obscure, couched in parables and similes, as if he wished his readers to penetrate into his meaning by their own efforts alone, do not thou be discouraged by the difficulties which at first may impede thy progress, but persevere, and thy recompence will be a perfect acquaintance with a true sage, who fears and flatters no man; who permits no fallacy to shelter behind the great fame of its author; but who,

in all his works, has but one object in view, namely, the truth; to divest which from the fanciful incumbrances of would-be commentators, and to restore it to its native dignity and simplicity, were the occupations of his long and active life."

Such was the opinion of our Rabbi Moses bar Maimon; an opinion, the sincerity of which we have not the slightest right to call in question, when we consider that it was confidential, given by a father to his son, and on an occasion the most interesting and important to his paternal feelings, namely, while directing the choice of his beloved son in the selection of those authors and studies on which his future fame was to be founded. It becomes a natural question, why, notwithstanding the generally acknowledged worth and importance of Aben Esra's writings, his commentaries are not in universal use among the Israelites of the present day. The answer to this question is two-fold: 1. The manner in which Aben Esra wrote, the extreme conciseness and force of his style, which, rapid, like lightning, illumines with bright, but transient, rays the most difficult passages of Holy Writ, disqualifies his commentaries from being a manual for the every-day reader. This obscurity of style is such, that, as Maimonides justly observes to his son, "his works require diligent reading, profound meditation, and persevering assiduity;" requisites which but few men are able to bring to the reading of any author. 2. These obstacles, formidable as they are, would not have proved insurmountable to the ardent thirst after knowledge, which at all times has formed the distinguishing characteristic of the Jewish nation, were it not for the second reason, which, though in itself less just and well-founded, has exercised a greater influence over the works of Aben Esra.

At the time the great Jews of Spain, formed under the auspices of the illustrious R. Samuel Levi *Han-nagid*, combined the study of sacred and profane literature, of the Talmud and mundane sciences; and the union of the two antagonist systems of R. Henoah, the son of R. Moses,

the Babylonian, and of R. Joseph ben Stanas ben Abethur, in the school of Lucena, produced the illustrious names which form the subject of our article. Nearly about the same time another school was formed in France, which spread its influence over Germany and Poland. This school, which was founded about the year 1070, by Rabenu Gershom, of Mayence, and his great pupil, R. Jacob ben Jakar, reached its highest perfection under the celebrated R. Salomon ben Isaac Jarchi, called Rashi. Of his biography little is known, except that he was born at Troyes about the year 1040; that, after having been a disciple of R. Jacob ben Jakar, (and most probably of Rabenu Gershom likewise,) he himself presided over the school at Troyes, where he died in the sixty-fourth year of his age. These few facts furnish the ground on which many curious (not to say, fabulous) adventures, have been embroidered. Thus, it is related that his mother, when *enceinte*, must have been crushed to death by a loaded waggon, which she could not avoid, in a narrow alley, but that the wall on the side where she stood gave way, and formed a niche in which she was safely sheltered until the waggon had passed. It is also related, that, during his youth he passed seven years, נ"ז ונ"ח, erring about the world, in order to expiate a trifling transgression committed by his father; that when Godfrey, of Bouillon, was appointed leader of the first crusade, he wished to consult Rashi, who, by means of his cabbalistic powers, rendered himself invisible, until he had obtained the assurance of safety for himself and his brethren; when he suddenly appeared in the presence of the awe-stricken chief, and predicted the issue of the first crusade. It is even asserted that Jarchi travelled into Egypt, where he paid a visit to Maimonides; although it is a well-known fact that the former died a quarter of a century before the latter was born.

We shall not stop to express an opinion respecting all or any of these *on dits*, but proceed at once to notice the school or system which received its completion from this great man,

and was continued by his three learned sons-in-law and their sons.

This system, which, by way of distinction, we shall call "The French," is, in some measure, a continuation of the ancient method of the Babylonian schools of Sura, Pumbeditha, and Nahardea: But the great difference between them is, that, while the latter discuss, weigh, and choose, among conflicting opinions, the former has no further purpose than to give a simple explanation of words; and, in order to do this, to combine all the opinions pronounced on any scriptural subject by former writers; without analyzing their intrinsic worth, their appositeness, their origin, or authority. In this spirit Rashi commented on the whole of the Sacred Writings, and on the entire Talmud; explaining the principal passages, partly grammatically, partly by transposition and emendation, and, not unfrequently, by the aid of French phrases, which fix the precise sense in which he understood any particular word. If his predecessors have, from a single word, composed a tale or allegory, he mentions it as a pretty witticism, or even as a possible truth, which must be received, because former teachers have transmitted it to us. His intention is no where thoroughly to investigate his subject; all that he does is to explain the opinions of his predecessors; whether these were correct or incorrect, profound or superficial, does not concern him; he receives and transmits as he found them.

This tacit acceptance of the commentaries, and of the Talmud, is the principal characteristic of the French system; which soon spread, and still predominates, throughout the east of Europe. It formed the most striking contrast with the Spanish system; the fundamental rule of which was, not to take any human opinion or assertion for granted, and to submit the writings and maxims of the greatest men to the scrutinizing examination of reason and critical acumen. This difference in the fundamental principles of the two systems was not calculated to promote concord amongst their respective adherents. The Spanish Jews looked

down upon their French brethren, and considered them as narrow-minded beginners, who, stopping short on the threshold of knowledge, were too timid and too prejudiced to penetrate into the sanctuary. And it is a singular fact, that not one of the Spanish writers ever quotes or mentions the commentaries of Rashi, except Aben Esra, who, during his stay in France, had become acquainted with the writings of Jarchi; but almost in no case adopts his views. The French Jews, and those who adhere to their system,—the Germans, and particularly the Poles,—looked upon their Spanish brethren with a more jaundiced eye, and with more rancorous feeling: They considered them as bold innovators, who, disregarding the received opinions of their predecessors, presumed to think for themselves, and to erect their own reason and knowledge into a tribunal for judging the authority of men whose dicta the French Jews held sacred. And while these French Jews were reluctantly compelled to acknowledge the superior talents of their Spanish rivals, they boasted of their own superior orthodoxy; so that even the revered name of Maimonides did not escape the acrimonious censures of the French Rabbies.

Unfortunately, the decay of the Moorish power in Spain, and the persecuting spirit of the kings of Castile and Arragon, wrought a most unfavourable change on the minds of the Spanish Jews. Alarmed at the sufferings they endured, they feared that the decay of their religion was at hand, and that nothing but the most rigorous Talmudism could form a barrier sufficiently strong to resist the inroads of persecution and of infidelity. Recourse was consequently had to Germany; and Rabenu Asher, a pupil of R. Meir, of Rothenburg, was, about the year 1305, called to preside over the Jewish congregations in Spain.

Educated in the most rigid principles of the French school, long a witness of the fanatical cruelty with which the Jews in Germany were treated,* and which proved fatal to

* We are sorry to be obliged to add, "and are still treated." Late events in

his own teacher, R. Meir, this learned Rabbi hated and despised all mundane knowledge, and considered the Talmud alone as the true centre of unison to the Jews. Philosophy and the sciences were objects of his undisguised enmity. The strict Talmudic spirit by which he was animated gradually possessed the congregations over which he presided. The study of the great writers of the ancient Spanish school was laid aside, and the French system became generally prevalent. Some few great men in vain tried to stem the torrent; and when the Jews were finally expelled from Spain, their system of learning was almost assimilated to that of their East-European brethren.

Of all the Spanish writers, none was gifted with a greater portion of critical acumen than Aben Esra; none attacked error with a more unsparing hand; none showed himself so merciless to established prejudices, or so regardless of the authority by which such prejudices were upheld, as this great Rabbi. Therefore, none stood so directly opposed to the adherents of the French system as he did. His well-founded reputation and acknowledged piety placed him beyond the reach of attack or of direct censure; but his free ideas, his enlightened views, might be misunderstood or misconstrued. The obscurity of his style rendered it difficult to arrive at his true meaning. As philosophy and science decreased among the Jews; as the true understanding of the Sacred Scriptures became more and more scarce amongst them; as their learning, driven with them from France and Spain, was compelled to seek a shelter in Poland; it became easy for interested men to misrepresent an author whom they could not understand, or to assign a secondary rank to a commentator whose sober expositions in no instance agreed

Hamburgh,—a city which, in a great measure, owes its re-gained independence to Jewish patriotism, and its commercial prosperity to Jewish enterprise,—are alike disgraceful to the age, the perpetrators, and the government, which upholds such outrageous fanaticism.—EDIT.

with their vapid explanations, and whose spirit of research and investigation gave them umbrage because it exposed their mediocrity. "Aben Esra is too free a writer," was the outcry of the Polish Rabbies; "he is too unguarded in his expressions; he may become dangerous to the youthful student." Such were the opinions they presumed to pronounce on one of the greatest, most enlightened, and most pious men the Hebrew nation ever produced; and far as their influence extended, they did, in a great measure, succeed in preventing the writings of Aben Esra from being generally known and appreciated. It is only since the revival of real learning among the Jews, since the middle of the last century, that Aben Esra begins again to be studied and admired; and his works will doubtless exercise a most salutary influence on the minds of the rising students, who will find their knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures extended by his aid; and who, from him, will learn how perfectly consistent and reconcilable the most sincere and heart-felt attachment for the doctrines of Judaism is with the most free investigation of these doctrines, and the clearest and plainest explanation of Holy Writ.

We have been betrayed into this digression, and to anticipate the narration of events which, according to the ordinary course of our article, ought to have been reserved to a much later period, by the desire to vindicate the memory and writings of a great man, injured by the narrow-minded suspicions of hyper-orthodoxy, and deprived, by conscious mediocrity, of that meed of admiration which is so justly his due. Having performed this act of justice we now return to our narrative.

Aben Esra continued his travels until a late period of his life; and, eventually, died at Rhodes, in the seventy-fifth year of his age. His dying words prove that his brilliant genius and mental tranquillity did not forsake him to the last: they were, **ואברהם בן חמש ושבעים שנה בצאתו מחרון עף העולם.** "And Abraham was seventy and

five years old when he departed from this world of wrath."* His writings are very numerous, though many are still in manuscript. A learned writer in the *בכורי העתים* for 1826, (pp. 53, 54,) enumerates twenty-eight distinct works on various subjects,

* An allusion to Genesis xii. 4. Aben Esra plays upon the word *חרן*, "Haran," which, by the addition of one letter, he turns into *חרון*, "wrath."

by Aben Esra; as commentaries on Holy Writ, theology, philosophy, philology, cabbala, natural philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, astrology, and poems on various occasions.* And such were the amazing powers of his mind, that he has enriched every subject on which he has written.

* His beautiful lines on chess, which have often been translated, are universally known and admired.

(To be continued.)

IV. THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT AMONG THE ISRAELITES PREVIOUS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MONARCHY.*

"AND ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy people." (Exodus xix. 6.)

"PROCLAIM among the nations, The Lord reigneth!" (1 Chronicles xvi. 31.)

THE form of government established among the Israelites by Moses, according to the commands of the Deity, is doubly interesting in our eyes; not only as securing to every individual the greatest possible liberty, compatible with the rights of all, and obedience to the laws; but chiefly as being a pure theocracy, instituted by the Deity himself, for the happiness and welfare of the people selected from among all nations of the earth, to be the guardians of religious truth and morality, and the teachers of mankind.

The original form of government among the descendants of Abraham was the patriarchal, which continued to prevail even during the time the Israelites were slaves in Egypt; for they still adhered to the customs of their fathers, and had not adopted Egyptian institutions. The chief rule over every family was in the hands of the father, whom his children and descendants cheerfully obeyed. The different families formed a tribe, at the head of which stood a *Nassi*, or prince, whose dignity at first was hereditary, the eldest son succeeding his father: But in process of time the office became elective; for as the nation increased, and it became impossible for the senior of a family to govern all its collateral branches, several kindred families united in the choice

of a leader, whose superior qualities entitled him to their confidence, and to whom a voluntary obedience was yielded. These elective chiefs are called in Holy Writ, *Nessi-beth-ab*, "chief of a family;" they are also called *Roshialphe Israel*, "chiefs of the thousands of Israel." These chiefs formed a standing counsel to the *Nassi*, or prince, of the tribe, by whose advice the affairs of the tribe were regulated. And while these chiefs or elders governed the respective families by which they had been elected, and judged their differences according to the dictates of equity, or the prescriptive rules of custom, the *Nassi* did not at all interfere with the internal government of the various families composing his tribe; but his authority was limited to matters which concerned the general welfare and external relations of the tribe. At first the *Nassi* kept a family register, in which the members of the tribe were inscribed at their birth; but as their numbers increased, this duty was delegated to officers properly appointed, and called *Shotrim*, "beadles."

Such were the national arrangements made by the Israelites for their internal government, and respected by the Egyptians, inasmuch as they did not interfere with the labour they exacted from the Israelites: Accordingly, in the history of

* From the *בכורי העתים* for 5587, (1827,) page 34, *et seq.*

their bondage we find that the "elders of the people," and the "officers of the children of Israel," are repeatedly mentioned. (Exodus iv. 29; v. 15.)

This form of government subsisted among the Israelites until the Lord, remembering his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, led forth their descendants with an outstretched arm, and mighty power, in order to bring them to the land he had promised them. His intention in placing them in that land was not only to secure their temporal happiness, but also to separate them from the contaminating intercourse with idolaters, and to remove the temptation which the lascivious and sensual worship of false gods offered to their animal desires. And though, during their stay in Egypt, they had, in some degree, become polluted by the false religion of their taskmasters; yet the wondrous deeds which they had witnessed, and the obedience yielded by all the powers of nature to the God of Moses, of which they had ocular demonstration, restored to their minds a firm conviction of, and faith in, the truth of those religious tenets which they had inherited from their great ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; namely, that the Lord alone was Creator of the universe which He alone governs: And that to Him only all worship, praise, and prayer is due.

But as it did not enter into the Divine purpose that these salutary truths were to remain known to the Israelites only; but, on the contrary, it was determined that they should be rendered the means for spreading and rendering general the knowledge of these fundamental principles, so essential to the true happiness of man, the Deity, through Moses, his servant, made known to Israel, that He, the Lord, deigned to declare Himself their King, and that He would dwell amongst them like an earthly monarch, who, in the fulness of his majesty, resides amongst his subjects. The nation rejoiced that their powerful Protector and great Benefactor should vouchsafe to offer them so distinguished a mark of His favour, gladly consented, and did

homage to their heavenly Sovereign. Thence the land they inhabited is called "the Holy Land," "the residence of the Lord," which He consecrated by a visible sign of His glorious presence. Therefore likewise the Israelites, His subjects, are considered as the peculiar people of the Lord their God and King, to whose service they contributed their tithes and oblations in the same manner as the Egyptians paid their taxes and imposts to their earthly monarch.

The covenant having been ratified by the free consent of the nation, and the Lord declared to be their King, as they were declared to be His people, their Sovereign revealed Himself to His assembled subjects, and made known to them the fundamental laws destined for the newly-erected state. These laws were further explained to them by Moses, the authorized messenger of their Sovereign, who pointed out to them the happiness which would attend their loyalty and obedience, and the misfortunes which would result from their breach of allegiance. The assembled nation once more ratified the covenant by unanimously declaring, "Whatever the Lord has commanded we will do and hear." Thus the nation vowed fealty to the Lord as their God and King, while he appointed the Israelites to be unto Him a peculiar people.

In order that the nation might never, even for an instant, forget their Sovereign and Legislator, Moses, at the command of the Deity, erected the tabernacle and its various utensils, in order that these objects, being continually before their eyes, might recal to them their invisible Ruler, and impress on their minds the conviction, that the Lord of the universe is their King. The tabernacle was His palace: The mercy-seat over the cherubim, the throne on which dwelt the majesty of His presence; the table and the shew bread represented the royal banquet: The priests and Levites were the ministers, great officers of state, and attendants who wait on the royal presence, and mount guard in the inner and outer courts of the palace. Thus all the external attributes of

royalty were presented to the minds of the Israelites, who felt happy that their Sovereign's power was equalled by His wisdom and goodness: That to secure their own felicity, they need but observe the covenant into which they had entered with Him, and pay willing obedience to His beneficent laws: And that while He deigned to continue their Protector, they need not fear the utmost efforts of human power and malignity.

The Lord having been recognised as their King, to whom they had sworn fealty and allegiance, the worship of idols became high treason; and whosoever was guilty of that crime, forfeited his head. Therefore strangers, who dwelt within "the land of the Lord," were likewise subject to this law, since, enjoying the protection of the Divine government, idolatry was tantamount to treason against that government. Whosoever incited others to worship idols was not only guilty of high treason himself, but likewise became guilty of aiding and abetting treason, and of undermining the foundation on which rested the safety and prosperity of the state. Sorcerers, necromancers, witches, and wizards were likewise considered as idolaters, because, by their vain arts, they seduced the people from that natural dependence in which they ought to stand towards their Sovereign. And as it was impossible that the commonwealth should prosper while treason was either overtly carried on or hatching against the Sovereign, this crime, which endangered the very existence of the nation, could only be expiated by the blood of the offender: And therefore the law of Moses, which in all its other enactments is most mild and benignant, shows no mercy to the idolater: As we read, "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, who is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth;

thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare him, neither shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt surely kill him, thy hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people; and thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die, because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear and fear, and do no more any such wickedness as this among you." (Deut. xiii. 6-11.) This passage of Holy Writ, while it points out to us the rigid path of duty marked out for every Israelite in the case of enticement to idolatry, so that the father was not permitted to screen his children, the husband his wife, nor the friend his dearest and best-beloved friend, also tells us the reason why so rigorous a punishment is exacted, namely, "because he has sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt," &c.; he has sought to seduce thee from that allegiance which is doubly due to the Lord, as thy God and as thy King. Thus he was punished, not only because he offended the Deity by his idolatry, but chiefly on account of his wicked treason, of his overt act of rebellion, by which he endangers the prosperity of his people, violates the covenant of allegiance and protection between the Sovereign and his subjects, and, in so doing, attacks and threatens to destroy the foundation on which their social compact has been raised, and their very existence as a nation is based. And as the offender thus recklessly brings on the utter ruin of all his fellow-citizens, it becomes the duty of all the members of the state, who have sworn fealty to their Sovereign, to remember their oath, and instead of giving way to ill-timed and misplaced pity, to listen to the dictates of loyalty, and not, by screening the rebel, to become the abettors of his treason.

While the law thus rigorously provides for the punishment of him who seeks to reject the authority from

which that law emanates, it takes care to acquaint the subjects with the infinite perfections of their Sovereign, to whose goodness, mercy, wisdom, and power, they are indebted for every felicity they enjoy, as life is his gift, and their happiness his work. Love and gratitude combine with awe and veneration to inspire the Israelite with those feelings of reverence and devotion for his great and glorious King, the Lord and Ruler of the universe, which his reason tells him are the only means of showing himself at all deserving of the numerous benefactions his Sovereign has bestowed on him. He is told, that, in return for happiness, temporal and eternal, all that the Lord his God and King requires of him is to fear and to love his Sovereign Benefactor; and to obey those laws which have been enacted, not with the purpose of shackling his liberty, or of encroaching on his just rights, but in order to secure to all perfect freedom, in a manner compatible with the rights of every individual, and the allegiance due to their heavenly Monarch.

As idolatry, or rather high treason, was so strictly prohibited, and visited with so severe a punishment, by the fundamental law of the Israelites, care was taken to remove them as much as possible from the danger of contagion. Should it be asked, how it comes that a nation which had been eye-witness to the wondrous deeds and mighty power of the Lord, who had seen that His will controls the universe, and that all nature is submissive to His behest; how such a nation could at all become tempted to forsake that God, and address their worship to images, the workmanship of human skill, which reason proved to be alike inanimate and impotent; or, to the powers of nature which, from experience, they knew were subordinate to the great God of Israel? we answer, that the most blinded Heathen did not suppose that the image he worshipped, or even the heavenly bodies, to which he paid his adoration, were the creator of the world. He knew and felt that there was one Supreme Being, one great First Cause, which had given existence to all the universe.

But he believed that this Being was too great and too perfect to take cognizance of this nether creation; which, therefore, was abandoned to different powers, or demons, some good, some bad, which governed the earth; and to propitiate these governors was his interest, if not his duty. These demons, or some one or other of them, he worshipped in the image his own skill had formed: It was their influence he adored when he prostrated himself before the rising sun, or offered sacrifices to the silent stars. But as it was felt that the belief in, and worship of, beings whose power, duration, and attributes, were confessedly finite and conditional, could not satisfy the intellectual soul, or take any strong hold of the reasoning mind, those who invented the various systems of mythology which prevailed throughout the Pagan world, found it needful to awaken the desires, and excite the passions of the worshipper by rites of the most lascivious and intoxicating nature: So, that his senses being bribed by the enjoyment he derived from the voluptuous and theatrical ceremonies of his religion, the Heathen considered the truth or falsehood of that religion as of minor importance, and seldom made this a subject of his inquiries.

These voluptuous rites and ceremonies were the bait by which the thoughtless Israelite was most likely to be caught. Gifted by nature with an ardent imagination and strong desires, placed by Providence in a land which, for its salubrity, fertility, and richness, merited and obtained the appellation, "the land that floweth with milk and honey," and particularly liable to seduction from his own innocence, and confiding character, the Israelite might easily become tempted to join in rites and pleasures gratifying to his senses, and to which at first, perhaps, he did not assign any religious importance: But as he once tasted the intoxicating enjoyment, as he once defiled the native purity of his mind, his excited passions, freed from the wholesome restraint in which the law of the Lord had kept them, could not so easily be calmed; the sober majesty of the

Divine worship his own law prescribed, the purity and innocence of its rites, lost all influence over his mind; and when he found that raptures such as those by which he had once been intoxicated, could only be enjoyed by again joining in the idolatrous orgies where first he had sacrificed his real happiness, he no longer hesitated, but, trying to assuage his pangs of conscience by the reflection, that he still was firm in his faith that he full well knew the Lord God of Israel was sole Creator and Ruler of the universe, and never intended to offer adoration to an idol, but simply to enjoy pleasure when it was placed within his reach, he madly rushed on, and soon emulated his heathen instructors in their bacchanalian frenzy.

This was foreseen, and laws were given accordingly; the effect of which, if strictly obeyed, must have been, to secure the Israelite against the infection of heathen customs. It was not the intention of the Legislator to render His subjects either unsocial or inhospitable: But while He left all the finer feelings of humanity full scope in the breast of the Israelite, He regulated His intercourse with neighbouring nations in such a manner as to deprive it of its noxious influence.

The first of these protecting regulations was, that every stranger who sojourned in the "land of the Lord" was compelled to abstain from all idolatrous observances or rites during his stay in that land. He could not be, and was not, compelled to join in the service of the Lord God of Israel: Indeed, from most of the ceremonial observances of the Israelite he remained excluded, unless he became naturalized by submitting to that painful operation, which then did, as it still does, stamp its distinguishing mark on

the Israelite. But he could be prevented from instilling the venom of his own foul superstitions into the minds of the people among whom he dwelled. The prohibition was, therefore, peremptory; and death was the penalty of the audacious stranger who violated the law of the land, by meditating treason against its lawful Sovereign. In subjecting the stranger to this penalty, no injustice was committed, nor were the rights of hospitality infringed on; for the instant he chose to take up his residence among the Israelites, he was informed, that the Lord of the universe was the Sovereign Ruler of their land; that, therefore, according to the fundamental laws of the state, the worship of no other god was permitted: And as he was likewise made acquainted with the punishment which the law inflicts on the transgressor, it was at his own option whether he would remain and yield obedience to that law which extended its protection to him, in common with every other inhabitant of the land; or whether he would depart, and take up his abode in another country.

Nor was any violence offered to his conscience: For as the tenets of polytheism were most lax and undefined, no man was compelled to restrict his worship to one Godhead only; but could choose to which of the many imaginary deities he would, for a time, address his orisons without fear of offending any, or all, of the other gods. And as it was the general custom among idolators to worship the local deity of the place in which they resided, the Heathen, who joined in the worship of the Israelites, could do so without any violation of his own religious feelings, or the fear of incurring the wrath of his gods.

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VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

מ"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 305.)

R. ELEAZAR, the son of Azariah, said, "If there be no knowledge of the law, there can be no correct worldly conduct; and if there be no correct worldly conduct, there certainly can be no law: If there is no fear of God, there can be no wisdom; and if there be no wisdom, there can be no fear of God: If there be no knowledge, there can be no understanding; and if there is no understanding, there can be no knowledge. If there is no meal, there can be no (study of the) law; and if there is no (study of the) law, there is no meal." (III. 23.)

COMMENTARY. *R. Eleazar ben Azariah saith*—After having pointed out to us the rank which mankind occupies in the scale of creation, the duties and the degree of love which distinguish the Israelites, and the great value and importance of the law which has been confided to their guardianship, he next proceeds to lay before us the important rules, which, in connexion with the instruction he has already bestowed, will aid us in our progress to moral perfection; as, on the other hand, they point out to us the great sources whence flow moral imperfection and failure.

If there be no knowledge of the law, there can be no correct worldly conduct—We have already explained that the word "law," in its general acceptation, denotes all those statutes and regulations which govern the actions of man, and direct his faith and knowledge to the Lord: Thus the word תורה "revealed law," does not only denote the sacred code delivered to the Israelites at Sinai, but also that most ancient code in which the reciprocal duties of all mankind were laid down, and which was revealed unto Noah, the second progenitor of the human race. By the

words דרך ארץ, which we render "correct worldly conduct," are meant those customs and institutions which, with some modifications and variations, have been adopted as the standard for regulating the conduct of men in their intercourse with each other, and which are essentially necessary in order to uphold the social edifice. But though these last mentioned institutions exercise a powerful influence on the minds, and, consequently, on the actions of man, and contribute greatly towards the preservation of that harmony and adhesiveness throughout its various branches, which are the foundations of all society; still the great bond of union among men is conformity of faith in, and obedience to, the commands of the revealed law of God. For when the dictates of this law are universally obeyed by all the members of a society, they have an unerring guide to point out to them the precise duties they owe to each other, and the proper line of conduct which will secure their happiness. We call this guide unerring, not only because, confessedly emanating from the Centre of all perfection, it must necessarily be perfect, but because it is free from that

diversity of opinion to which social institutions, as the offspring of human imperfections, must always be subject. Accordingly, in examining the habits and customs which prevail in various climes, we find that, not only are they essentially different in themselves, but also in the spirit from which they spring: So that what is unlawful in one place is lawful in another: What by one society is repudiated as vice and depravity, is by another society practised and lauded as virtue and public spirit: Nay, what at one time is revered as the perfection of patriotism and philanthropy, is, by the self-same society, at another time, branded as treason, and an outrage on the common rights of humanity. We do not say, that this diversity and uncertainty of their opinions is a reproach to our species; for as long as our reasoning faculties continue in their present finite state, they must be swayed by the impression which they receive from circumstances, according to the aspect in which they present themselves to the mind: And as that aspect is subject to change, and men have nothing fixed and stable in themselves, by the aid of which they could correct the vaticinations to which they are liable, they must vary in their views and decisions according to the momentary influence which the mutations of external events exercise over them; unless by adopting the revealed law of God as their rule of conduct, they acquire a stay and support which, independent of the variations of time and place, admits of no deviation from its enactments: But having once established, on authority which no one can doubt or call in question, what is good and just under all circumstances, its rules are immutably fixed, and every departure from its precepts is peremptorily forbidden. This absence of all uncertainty, this firmness not to be shaken, which pervades all the commandments of the Divine Laws, commandments with which every believer is acquainted, are the cause why these laws form the strongest bond of unity amongst men; as,—being all governed by the same spirit, always pursuing the same conduct,

under similar circumstances, and influenced but by one motive in all they do, namely, the desire to perform their duties,—they can place that unbounded confidence in each other, and must entertain that sincere respect for each other, which every virtuous man feels in and for himself.

While this is the case generally with respect to the Divine laws, it is particularly and most eminently so with respect to those laws which the Deity vouchsafed to reveal to the Israelites through Moses his servant. There can be no doubt but that he who altogether abandons the line which these laws mark out for him, cannot possibly be correct in that worldly conduct which, as a member of the community of Israel, it behoves him to pursue; for, as his mind is no longer possessed of that steadfastness which the law alone can impart, and he can consequently not lay claim to that universal confidence and respect which those who adhered to these laws felt for each other, that confidence and respect being founded on the stability and uniform spirit which the Divine precepts impart to the minds of men, he stands alone in his community; and, feeling that his vacillating conduct renders him an object of suspicion to others, they, in their turn, become so to him: So that habits and a train of thought possess his mind which are not the emanations of brotherly love and universal goodwill; and as these feelings, together with the fear of the Lord inculcated by the law, form the basis on which correct worldly conduct is founded, he who harbours not these feelings and those fears cannot be truly correct in his worldly conduct. Therefore those of whom our teacher has, on a previous occasion, said, “that they break the covenant of our father Abraham, and expound the law contrary to its true sense,”* are the great enemies to correct worldly conduct, inasmuch as they endanger the firmness of principle and positive rules derived from the law, which lend to social institutions a stability they cannot otherwise possess, and decide the true correctness of worldly

* Vide Hebrew Review, vol. ii., p. 102.

conduct at all times by the same unerring, because invariable, standard.

The true correctness of worldly conduct, that is to say, the motives by which it is influenced, and the spirit by which it is animated, are in so close and intimate a connexion with the precepts of the law, that our teacher, in saying, that without a knowledge of the law there can be no correct conduct, has related to us a fact which it needs no very profound investigation to establish. The most sublime rules of correct worldly conduct are laid down in the Divine laws: The rights of our neighbour, which we must not infringe; the duties towards our neighbour, which we must scrupulously perform; humanity, forbearance, generosity, benevolence, justice, and obedience to lawful authority, are there, not only enjoined, but encouraged; revenge, obduracy, reckless ambition, grasping, avarice, indifference to human sufferings, injustice, and arrogance are not only forbidden, but guarded against. It is true that we see men who are unacquainted with the revealed law of God, and who nevertheless practise some of the virtues enjoined, and shun some of the vices forbidden, by that law: But if we closely examine the conduct of such men, we find that they do not act from any fixed principles; that their natural temper and conformation have a great deal to do with their virtues; and that, in most of them, the governing motive is selfishness; which bids them act correctly towards others, in order that others may act correctly towards them; therefore, their conduct, even in a worldly sense, cannot be called truly correct, as every action is hallowed by the intention from which it springs; and if that intention is not pure and correct, the action cannot be so. And as the only pure motives of action are to be found in the law, namely, love and veneration for the Deity, engendering obedience to his sacred will, it follows, that without the law there can be no correct worldly conduct.

And if there be no correct worldly conduct, &c.—The connexion between the revealed law of God and correct

worldly conduct is so close and intimate, that, as it is impossible that the latter can at all exist without the former, so, likewise, the want of correct worldly conduct proves the want of knowledge and influence of the law. For, as we have already stated, the Divine law imparts steadfastness of principle to the human mind: From this results rectitude of conduct, which remains true to itself under all circumstances, and does not swerve from the precise line which duty has traced. But when a man's actions are unsteady, when he permits the vacillating influence of external events to influence his mind, or the impetuosity of his passions to assume the government over his reason, he renounces that stay and support on which he ought to place his firmest dependence, and rejects the revealed will of his Creator, which to him becomes a nullity, of no import. For the purpose and tendency of the Divine law is, to promote the true happiness of all men; to spread among them feelings of brotherly love—of harmony and concord; that they may reciprocally aid each other in their progress to perfection, and in attaining that felicity which is the end and aim of their being. But when these beneficent views are interrupted by the misconduct of man; when he violates those duties which he owes to his neighbour; when he abuses the power confided to him by the Deity, so that his example becomes pernicious to others, and, instead of aiding, retards their progress to perfection; his worldly conduct establishes the fact, that to him there exists no Divine law. And though he may devote his time to the study of its precepts, though he may pass hours and days in extending his knowledge, the law exists not for him; he is ignorant of the spirit which animates him who obeys that law; his studies are a reproach to him, inasmuch as they only serve to mislead the mass of mankind, and induce them to exclaim, "Behold such an one; he spends all his time in studying the laws of his Maker; yet he is proud, unjust, grasping, ambitious, uncharitable, malicious; and his conduct is an outrage even upon the

institutions of society. Of what use then is the knowledge of the law?" To this our teacher replies, "Dismiss so erroneous an impression from your minds: Notwithstanding his studies, such a man is altogether ignorant of the sacred spirit which pervades the law of God and its beneficent precepts; for unless he

were in utter ignorance and darkness, he would square his actions by the rules which are laid down for him; and as he does not do so, but permits himself to violate the positive commands of his God, he fully proves that where there is no correct worldly conduct, there certainly can be no knowledge of the law.

(To be continued.)

II. ARE THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE JEWS ANTI-SOCIAL?

WE need not have recourse to works written during the dark and fanatical epoch of the chivalrous ages; we need not search the works of the modern infidel, for proofs, that the notions entertained by Jews, on their duties towards Gentiles, have been grossly misrepresented. Though every branch of Judaism has been overwhelmed with invectives, the rules which regulate the social relations of the Hebrews with those among whom they dwell have enjoyed the melancholy preference of being traduced with the greatest acrimony. That such has been the case in times when the *lex talionis* was to be made a plea for the nefarious proceedings entered into against the Jews, need not so much excite our astonishment; but it is surprising to see, that, in this enlightened age, men who command respect, on account of their manifold merits, should still rake up old prejudices and misinterpreted phrases, in the vain attempt to establish the anti-social character of Judaism. As the source from which the Jewish laws are deduced is accessible to all, we shall invite those who feel the importance of banishing discord and prejudice from the civilized world, to investigate with us a few of the leading points bearing on this subject; to compare with the text every argument we shall bring forward in support of our assertions; and, above all, to aid us in eradicating from the minds of the present generation the monstrous effects of antiquated errors and calumnies. The Hebrew reader, in particular, is earnestly called upon to examine his duties towards those who do not belong to the stock of Abraham, and still have

received us among them; who afford us protection under their laws; who disturb us not in the worship of the God of our fathers; and who are every day endeavouring more strenuously to make us forget the dismal times of our immediate ancestors. A brighter scene is gradually opening before us; we are rising in the estimation of mankind; then let us not forfeit the advantage we have gained; let us continue the humble people in banishment, claiming nothing, but deserving much.

The Hebrews could enter into collision with the stranger, either on their own soil, or as refugees among the different nations of the earth. The Jewish nation has experienced both cases: Alternately masters of a happy country, in possession of their own laws, and again a race of fugitives, expelled from their homes, indebted for a shelter where to rest their heads to the hospitality of others. The Divine code has furnished them with provisions for either circumstance; and the instances in which the Jews, as a body, have deviated from these rules are exceedingly scarce. The most superficial observer will acquit the Jewish nation of the charge, that they had a desire for conquest beyond the land of their fathers. Their divinely-inspired legislator might have imparted that impulse to the minds of his followers; and, if we consider the fertility of his genius, and the immensity of his influence over his nation, it may reasonably be expected that his wishes, had they tended that way, would have been crowned with success. But his high designs were vastly different from such an idea; by depicting to them the sweets of

peace, he moderated that ardour which the conquest of the promised land for a moment rendered necessary; and he energetically counteracted the exulting vanity derived from victory, by incessantly repeating to his people, that valour would avail them less than love of justice, than the protection afforded them by the God of Israel, than their resignation to the will of the Founder of their nationality. A peaceable inhabitant of the "land flowing with milk and honey," enjoying the toil and pleasures of agricultural occupations, the Hebrew was not to engage in offensive warfare; his sole duty was to repel the aggressor, who would directly or indirectly menace his independence. Every tenet of the Jewish law contributed to endear to the Israelite his native land; to attach him to it by indissoluble ties; to direct the whole of his attention rather to the maintenance of his own liberty, than to any infringement upon that of others. Nations famed for the rapidity and extent of their conquests have invariably risen into eminence like a meteor, and like an atmospheric appearance they exploded and were forgotten. Conquerors were certainly ever the most easily conquered; after having forced their iron yoke upon multitudes, they were subjugated by a horde generally more fierce and barbarous than themselves. But the peaceful tillers of the ground, and in general those who live by industry and toil, when attacked, are not an easy prey; they have a cause to fight for; and as they have ever respected the independence of others, they will not brook any inroad upon their own. Witness the respective fates of the Roman conquerors, of the Huns, of the Tartars; and, on the other hand, the strenuous and successful struggles of the small Swiss and Dutch republics. A more brilliant example than any other, however, is offered in the heroic resistance of the Jews against the violent and sacrilegious attacks of the tyrants of that day. Scripture compares Judah to a lioness robbed of her young ones, who, in her fury, tears to pieces all she seizes; and well might the exasperation to which our ancestors were driven, in defence

of their laws, justify the simile. But if, in reading the blood-stained annals of the Hebrews, we are appalled by the descriptions of calamities, and but seldom comforted by accounts of a more favourable nature, we must not forget, that the intention of the Prophets was to reform the people of Israel, to lead them back to the law; hence their succinct exposition of prosperous events; whereas they dwell with energy on the effects of the growing immorality of the nation, and incessantly cry, "Such are the consequences of your guilt; and unless you amend yourselves, be prepared for the worst!"

The spirit of proselytism, nearly allied to the spirit of conquest, was equally far from our institutions. Not by dint of arms, nor by that insensate proselytism which loosens the ties of nature, robs parents of their children, opens dungeons, and kindles *autos da fé*, was the law of Israel to be made the law of the world. A much more efficient means was to conduce to the same salutary end: If the Hebrews would but wisely execute their laws, they would prosper; and other nations, astonished at the beneficent effects, would eagerly seek the cause. "Keep, therefore, my commandments," we read in the Sacred Volume, "and do them: For this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." (Deut. iv. 6.) And on the last occasion, when Moses recommended the Divine law to his brethren, he foretold to them the propagation of the Word of God, in expressions which leave us no doubt as to their meaning: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall flow as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." (Deut. xxxii. 2.) Moral conviction is declared to be the sole instrument for the conversion of the Heathens, in Isaiah ii. 3: "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word

of the Lord from Jerusalem." Where then are the traces indicating a wish of universal dominion to be discovered in the Jewish dispensation? Do the Israelites really found their hopes on the subjugation of all other nations? Far from us be the thought! The Hebrews find in their doctrines the promise, that all the other nations of the earth will be led by the law of God, will learn of the Hebrews the carrying of these lessons into practice: Then war and hateful differences will utterly vanish, there will be no animosity between brother and brother on subjects of religion; for the whole world will adore our invisible God.

The work of Maimonides on the days of the Messiah, and what the Mishna has on the same subject, will furnish a proof more direct than our expressions could afford, that the general happiness of the world enters into the anticipations of the Jews, for the time when they will be released from bondage; and not their own individual advantage only. The extinction of all tyranny, perfect liberty and peace, will constitute the essential difference between the actual state of the world and the days when the Mes-siah will appear. Israel will live in peace with all nations, who will show deference to Israel on account of his superior righteousness and the miracles wrought for him. In those days, the epoch of which is indeterminate, there will be an end to all famine, war, cruel ambition, litigious contest, and unprofitable discussions: Happiness will be general on earth, and all manner of delight will be as abundant every where as the sand on the borders of the ocean. We do not believe, that there will be absolute equality in point of wealth or power; but in those days a moderate quantum of toil will insure the means of an easy life. Nor do we believe, that abundant harvests, plentiful vintages, and wealth of every description will be the desirable objects: But since want of corporeal necessities renders the perfection of our mental gifts impossible, and since man cannot give himself up to contemplation, while he is under the influence of low and earthly cares; we believe, that in those days there will exist good man-

ners, perfect righteousness, congregations of just men, and a complete knowledge of the Eternal. (Vide Maimonides's Preface to *Chelek*; Mishna, treatise *Sanhedrin*, chap. iv.)

After having, from motives explained in the Scriptures, prohibited any compact being made with the Canaanites, Moses himself showed the Israelites the example of entering into treaties of peace with strangers, and of strictly adhering to them. Numerous events recorded in Holy Writ prove, that the alliances between the Jews and their neighbours were both frequent and sincere. Thus David was the strict ally to the king of the Ammonites, until some great men of that nation, jealous at the grandeur of David, insulted the ambassadors whom the king of the Hebrews had delegated to condole with the young king of Ammon at the death of his father. A war was the consequence of the lawless conduct of the Ammonites, who paid dearly for it. Solomon made several compacts with the kings of foreign nations, principally with the sovereigns of Tyre and Egypt; and during the lamentable schism which tore the land after the death of the wise monarch, the kings of the two Hebrew branches frequently united their powers with those of the Syrians, Egyptians, &c., in the detestable hopes of entailing ruin on their brother tribes. This impious and anti national conduct did not escape the severe reproofs of the prophets, who loudly and intrepidly foretold the downfall of the people as the result of such unnatural proceedings. Hanani, the patriotic seer, was persecuted by king Asa, who was displeased at the manly remonstrances made to him by the prophet, on account of his having allied himself with the enemies of the Hebrews, to the detriment of the sister kingdom. Besides many other embassies to, and unions, with foreign nations recorded in the sacred text, we may mention the historical fact of the treaty of peace and amity, afterwards so fatal to the Jews, offered to the Romans by the great Judah Maccabeus.

As it had been the Divine will, that Palestine should be totally cleared of the Pagans who sullied the land

with the impurities of their idolatry, no choice could be left them but to leave the country or to die. Tradition informs us, that on the banners of the people Joshua had inscribed: "Flight, capitulation, or battle." In almost every conquered land the victors gradually assumed the manners of the vanquished. But the people of Canaan had given themselves up to a blind idolatry, which could but lead them and their associates to the utmost excesses of cruelty, superstition, and depravity, even to the sacrificing of human victims: As it is expressed in Exodus xxiii. 33, "They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee." "Every abomination which thy God hates, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods," &c. (Dent. xii. 31.) Thus, the utmost necessity required, that if the moral commandments of Moses were not to be rendered nugatory by the attractive power of example the sentence of expulsion pronounced against them should be executed. In reality they were not all banished; they always continued among the Israelites, either as tributaries, dependents, or as allies; and they were not seldom that source of evil to the Hebrews, which the legislator had represented they would become. The Israelites married their daughters, and gave their own daughters to the Canaanites, did what was an abomination to the Eternal, forsook their God, served idols, planted unholy groves, and soon fell into the most abject servitude.

But the anathema pronounced against the seven nations of Canaan did not extend to any other people with whom the Israelites might enter into collision. It was but in the case of obstinate resistance, that those taken with arms in their hands could be put to the sword, and this only after offers of peace had been proclaimed and rejected. Intermarriage, so severely prohibited with the Canaanites, was allowed with other nations generally; and we find, that one of the chiefs of the family of Caleb gave his daughter to one of his ser-

vants, who was an Egyptian by origin. (1 Chron. ii. 34.) Ruth was a native of Moab. David married a princess of Gessan; and, in the third chapter of the first book of Kings, where we read, that Solomon loved the Lord, and walked in the statutes of his father David; in the very chapter which records the wise choice king Solomon made among the offers which, in a nocturnal vision, were tendered to him by the Divinity; his marriage with the daughter of the Egyptian king is related without any mark of disapprobation; whereas we find, in another part of the same book, that Solomon is reproved for his passion for the many strange women he had congregated in his harem, not excepting even women of the seven nations, with whom intercourse had been strictly forbidden. In fine, even Moses himself was united to the daughter of a priest of Midian. All this will tend to prove, that contempt for the Gentiles had not been carried to that excess which is so often made the subject of obloquy by unreflecting men, who do not consider that absolute cosmopolitanism and absolute patriotism cannot exist collaterally; and that it is the task of the legislator to blend the duties belonging to each principle without destroying either;—a problem which has, according to the belief of the greatest men, been happily solved by the guide of the Israelites.

As to the strangers inhabiting the Holy Land, while the Jews possessed it, they were divided into such as had obtained naturalization, and had taken up their constant abode among the Jews, גֵּרִים, and casual visiters, aliens, נָכְרִים.

The *Gher* enjoyed all the political privileges of Jews. He was equal to the Israelite before the law, could claim his charity, and was, on the other hand, to act conformably to the established law of the land, in all his transactions with his co-residents. That by "stranger," *Gher*, he alone was not meant who had taken upon himself the religious duties of the Jew, as has, by several, been asserted, we wish to infer from Deuteronomy xiv. 21: "Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself: Thou shalt give

it unto the stranger (*Gher*) that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien (*Noiri*). Hence the stranger, *Gher*, towards whom so much sympathy, humanity, and justice, is recommended, nay, made incumbent on the Hebrews, was not one amalgamated with the people of God, as to his religious observances, and still less his creed, inasmuch as those points had reference to him only; but he was under the control of the law, as we before remarked, in his intercourse with Jews. But if we want a proof beyond all possibility of cavil, that the stranger, *Gher*, need not, of necessity, be one of our creed, that the idea contained in the word *Gher* is far from implying a convert, a proselyte, let us refer to the nineteenth verse of the tenth chapter of Deuteronomy, where, in words of inexpressible sublimity, the great interpreter of the Deity binds it upon the heart of his brethren, whom he had saved from the house of bondage, from the despondency of slavery, in a land where they had been treated, not as strange men, but as strange beasts of burden: "Love ye therefore the stranger: (*Gher* :) For ye were strangers (*Gherim*) in the land of Egypt." Were the Jews in the land of Egypt ever converts to the blind idolatry of their task-masters? Did they ever bow before Apis, Isis, and Pitha? Certainly not. And still they were *Gherim* in the land of Mizraim. Therefore *Gher* means not a proselyte only, but every stranger who pitches his tent in Israel. How numerous are the philanthropic duties of the Hebrew towards this stranger who has sought a shelter on his shore! One justice, one law, one right, will be for the Jew and the stranger; he will be allowed every faculty to increase his wealth; he can never be oppressed nor made to suffer by any exceptional laws. No time

was to be more fatal to the Hebrews than those in which the tears of the stranger would be caused to flow. Indeed, it suffices not to abstain from annoying the stranger, to leave him his liberty: Israel must go farther; he must help the stranger, be his protector, his friend, charm from the downcast mind of the expatriated the sad remembrance of his woes: "Our Lord loveth the stranger, and provides food and raiment for him," are the express words of that Book containing the never-to-be-forsaken laws of a people who are represented to live under an anti-social dispensation; of a people who are accused of having taken it as an axiom, "Love thy friend, and hate thine enemy;" whereas their guide, in unequivocal terms, enjoins it on them as their most sacred duty, that they must love the stranger, at a moment when they emerged from the most detestable servitude, forced upon them in the land of strangers. Every third year the tithes were divided among the Levites, the indigent stranger, the widow, and the orphan. An angle of the field, (according to the commentators, one-sixtieth of the whole, on which no imposts could be levied,) was to be left untouched for the use of the destitute, whether Hebrew or stranger. Gleaning on one's own field was a heinous sin; it was robbing the poor. After having shaken the olive-tree to bring down the fruit, the Jew is not allowed to ascend the tree for the purpose of plucking olive after olive from the branches; after having carried the sheaves from the field, he was not to return to fetch whatever sheaves might have been forgotten at the first gathering;—these acts would have been so many infringements on the well-established right of the widow, the orphan, and the stranger.

M. H. B.

(To be continued.)

III. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 312.)

CHAPTER XXII.

It behoves us to endeavour to explain why the decree pronounced

against Moses was confirmed by an asseveration, so that his prayer could not be granted; which will lead us

to examine what really was the offence committed by Moses. On this subject opinions are very divided. Our Rabbies, of blessed memory, maintain, that the grievous sin of which Moses was guilty was his having insulted and reviled the community of Israel, when he said to them, "Hear now, ye rebels." (Num. xxi. 10.) Whence they deduce the axiom, that whosoever vilifies and insults an entire community is guilty of an offence as heinous as sacrilege. But this exposition is very unsatisfactory; and open to the objection, that the offence committed in using these words cannot be so serious as to be altogether unpardonable, since we find that Moses, on a subsequent occasion, repeats the same expression, without fear of offending, when he says, "From the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord." (Deut. ix. 7.) And it is not to be expected that Moses would wantonly have repeated an expression which dire experience taught him to be so fatal in its consequences.

The great Maimonides endeavours to explain the precise nature of Moses's offence, in a manner which, though ingenious in itself, does not carry conviction home to a reflecting mind: His words are, "It is a fact well known, that even the father of the pious, as well of former ages as of latter days, even Moses our teacher, of blessed memory, incurred the Divine reproof: 'Because ye did not put your trust in me, to sanctify me before the eyes of the children of Israel, but disobeyed my commands at the waters of Meribah, where you failed to hallow me.' (Num. xxi. 12, &c.) His fault consisted in the sudden transition from the virtuous perfection of meek forbearance, to the opposite extreme of overbearing wrath, which led him to utter the scornful reproach: 'Hear now, ye rebels, shall we produce water for you out of this rock?' (Num. xxi. 10.) This departure from the path of perfect virtue, which in him was that of moderation, justly merited the Divine reproof; as wrath and scorn from a man like Moses,

and directed against an entire community, was not only unbecoming, and wrong in itself, but doubly reprehensible, inasmuch as the Deity, whose Spirit was known to rest on Moses, thereby became, as it were, desecrated. The words and the conduct of Moses served for an example which all men strove to imitate, because they hoped, by following that example, to attain eternal, as well as temporal, happiness: But when he evinced so pernicious a quality as wrath, which can only result from moral imperfection, he destroyed the salutary influence his example had hitherto exercised. The words of the reproof, 'Ye disobeyed my command,' are to be explained as follows: Moses was not speaking to a silly, unreflecting mob, but to an assembly of men and women, each of whom was gifted with the power of reasoning and penetration in a most eminent degree; or, as the Talmudists express it, 'the least of whom ranked with Ezekiel, the son of Busi.' His words and actions, therefore, were submitted to the test of deep thought and keen penetration; and when it was seen that he suddenly departed from his usual forbearance, and waxed wroth, the inference was, not that he had yielded to an immoral aptitude, but that he must have known the Deity was greatly offended, and wroth at their request for water; whereas, such was not actually the case; but, on the contrary, the Divine command to supply them with water did not express any reproof, as it only said, 'Take thy staff and assemble the community.'"

Thus far Maimonides: And while we are ready to do every justice to the ingenuity of the exposition, we again repeat, it does not either satisfy or convince us. It has not met with greater favour in the eyes of the learned Nachmanides;* though he, in one respect, coincides with Rabenu Moses bar Maimon; namely, he too is of opinion, that the disobedience, on account of which Moses was punished, was not his having struck the rock, instead of addressing it, as the Lord had commanded. His argument is, that the rock, an

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. i., p. 58, note 2.

inanimate and senseless object, was not adapted to receive a command in the name of the Deity; and as Moses had been bid, "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock." &c., (Num. xxi. 8,) it is evident, that the intention was, he should strike the rock; for, if that were not the case, there could be no occasion for his taking the rod with him, on his being expressly commanded by the Deity so to do." But this inference is, to say the least of it, forced, and not borne out by the authority of Holy Writ; for, when Moses, on a former occasion, had been directed to procure the Israelites a miraculous supply of water, the words of the Divine command were, "Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb: And thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink," &c. (Exod. xvii. 5, 6.) Here, likewise, Moses is directed to take the rod in his hand; but, so far from its being a tacit inference, that, having the rod in his hand, he must smite the rock, he is expressly told what use he was to make of his staff; and, had the Divine intention, on the second occasion, likewise been, that he should strike the rock, he would not have been reduced to the necessity of concluding or guessing what he was to do; but the Divine command would have been as explicit at Meribah, as it had been at Horeb. Nor was the rod an instrument indispensable to the production of water; as that was not effected through any force inherent in the essence and nature of the rod, which does not generally, when struck against a rock, split that rock, and cause the waters to flow; but, on the contrary, the production of water was altogether supernatural, and caused by the command of the Deity, which required neither the agency of rod nor of rock for its auxiliaries; but which was pleased to confirm what, at the commencement of his mission, had been said

to Moses; namely, "And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." (Exod. iv. 17.) Thus the rod was, by the will of the Deity, erected into an instrument for working wonders; not because of any secret or inherent power which appertained to its nature and essence, but because it was the will of the Lord that such should be the case. Accordingly, when the plagues of hail and of locusts were brought on the Egyptians the Lord commanded Moses, "Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven that there be hail in all the land of Egypt," &c. And again: "Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt," &c. (Exod. ix. 27; x. 12.) In either case we read, "And Moses stretched forth his rod." (Exod. ix. 23; and x. 13.) But it was not any power or quality inherent in the stick which produced these miraculous effects, as Holy Writ takes care to inform us: "And the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt." (Exod. ix. 23.) And again: "And the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning the east wind brought the locusts." (Exod. x. 13.) So that we are not an instant left in doubt as to the true cause of these events. The command given to Moses to take the rod in his hand does therefore not absolutely imply that he is to use the rod, or strike the rock with it. The remark that the rock, as an inanimate and insensate object, was not adapted to receive the commands of the Deity, is likewise incorrect; for all matter is inert and senseless, until it receives the impression stamped on it by Omnipotence. Thus, when the Divine command was addressed to the earth, as is said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind;" or to the water, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the living creature;" (Gen. i. 20, 24;) although, in either case, the object addressed was senseless and inanimate, the command was punctually obeyed, as indeed it is by all creation, animate

or inanimate, sensible or destitute of sense.

Thus we see that the exposition of the most accredited commentators on the subject of Moses's sin does not afford satisfaction or produce conviction. According to our own opinion, his offence was disobedience, he having struck the rock to which he was commanded to speak. This is plainly conveyed by the Divine reproof, "Because ye have rebelled against my word at Meribah;" (Num. xx. 24;) an expression not applicable either to Moses's having addressed the Israelites by the epithet, "Ye rebels," or to his being angry without cause, and his sudden transition from meek forbearance to arrogant wrath; but solely to his deviation from the precise directions of the Deity. And the cause why the decree pronounced against him was confirmed by an asseveration, arose from the want of faith which he evinced in this matter: As Holy Writ declares, "Because ye did not believe in me to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." (Num. xx. 12.) This want of faith in Moses was calculated to weaken the confidence of the Israelites in one of the chief principles of their religion; that, namely, the Divine Providence renders the powers of nature subservient to the truly pious man; a principle which Moses himself inculcates in his psalm, (the 90th,) where he says, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, and abides under the shadow of the Almighty;" that is to say, he, who in perfect piety and uprightness puts his trust in the Lord, need not fear the ills of nature: As he says, "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he has set his love upon me, there-

fore will I deliver him," &c. (Psalm xci. 5—7; 13, 14.) Here Moses not only declares that the truly pious are under the especial guard of Providence, but also that the ordinary effects of nature are altered through their unbounded confidence in, and love of, the Deity; and, in support of Moses's assertion, our Rabbies relate that R. Hanina, the son of Dosa, having accidentally set his foot upon an adder, and been bit, the ordinary course of nature was altogether inverted, inasmuch as R. Hanina remained unhurt, while the adder died; on which occasion the Rabbi remarked to his pupils, "My sons, it is not the sting of the adder which slays us, but it is sin." (Talmud, treatise *Berachoth*, folio 34.) Instances of similar wondrous interpositions of Providence subjecting nature to the truly pious man are related, not only of R. Hanina ben Dosa, but also of R. Phineas, the son of Jair; (*Chulin*, folio 24;) of Nahum; (*Ishgam-zu*, treatise *Tangnith*, folio 23;) and of several others. (*Ibid.*, folio 25.) And that such is the fact is also asserted by Eliphaz, who saith, "For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God; thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows: Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee," &c. (Job. xxii. 26—28.) And if the powers of nature are thus rendered subordinate to the pious man, we may infer in how much greater a degree they are subject to the prophet—the inspired messenger of the Deity—from the words of Elijah: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall be no dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." (1 Kings xvii. 1.) And again: "If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty." (2 Kings x. 12.) Which plainly show the control he exercised over nature obedient to his word. Such was likewise the case with Elisha when he caused iron to swim contrary to its natural bent; (2 Kings vi. 6;) and many other wonders which he performed without any previous communication from the

Deity. Nay, Moses himself did, on one occasion, exercise this wondrous control over nature, without previous directions to that effect from the Lord being recorded: As we read, "And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own mind: If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth and swallow them up, with all that appertaineth unto them, and they go down quick into the pit, then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord. And it came to pass as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah and all their goods," &c. (Num. xvi. 28-32.) This was done by Moses himself in the full confidence of his faith, although Holy Writ does not tell us, that the Lord had directed him so to do: And it is in support of this great doctrine of our holy religion, that the prophet declares that the Lord "confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers." (Isaiah xlv. 26.) Whosoever wavers in his belief respecting this important principle, and doubts whether the Lord will confirm the will of a prophet or pious man, who is worthy thereof, calls in question one of the chief branches emanating from the fundamental principles of the Divine law, namely, the evidences of revelation. This is more especially the case, when men are required to sanctify the name of the Lord; then it is our duty to uphold and maintain in the most positive manner our belief, that nature and all its powers are subject to such inspired and pious men, as the Deity may vouchsafe to deem worthy. When, therefore, we see a prophet of the Lord, who is approved in his Divine mission, and who, in the hour of extreme need, refuses his interposition to save an entire nation, or a whole

community, from impending ruin, there can be no doubt but the conduct of such a prophet must, in a high degree, tend to lessen our reverence for, and faith in, the law: But if the prophet, who, thus abstains from using the power with which he is invested by the Deity, is the very messenger through whom the Divine law has been imparted to us; if he who, more than any other man, has been found worthy of being intrusted with the power of controlling the operations of nature, does, at a season of great public calamity, refrain from exercising that power, or from uttering a single word to alleviate the general suffering, he, more than any other man, casts a doubt on the authenticity of his own mission, and shakes the faith of men in that law which he has been chosen to make known to them: For in that case it appears as if this inspired messenger himself doubts whether he is possessed of that power over nature, with which his own law declares him to be invested; thus, he himself appears void of faith, and, therefore, the Divine reproof to Moses was, "Ye did not believe in me." For had Moses and Aaron, when the Israelites came to them, clamouring for water, at once commanded the rock to give water, they might have been certain, that "the Lord confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messenger." And thus the name of the Lord would have become sanctified through their faith. But when Moses and Aaron, to use the words of Aben-Ezra, fled from the congregation, and sought refuge at the door of the sanctuary, as if they were in utter despair, they evinced a complete want of faith in their own mission, and produced in others a corresponding want of faith in Him, as whose chosen servants they had been proclaimed. And though their delay proceeded from meekness, and the desire not to act except by the special command of the Deity, nevertheless, their apparent indecision and want of faith became fatal to them. When, therefore, Joshua, on another occasion, stood in need of a deviation from the ordinary course of nature, he did not

hesitate, or wait for the Divine communication, authorizing him how to act, but, in the fulness of his faith, he at once exclaimed, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon; and the sun stood still, and the moon stayed." (Josh. x. 12, 13.) For the Lord confirmeth the word of his servant: And Holy writ adds its testimony, "And there was no day like that before it," &c. Even in the days of Moses, so great a miracle was not wrought without previous directions from the Deity.

This want of faith is not the only sin committed by Moses on that occasion, but he also transgressed the Divine command, by preferring his opinion to the precise directions he had received: He was bid to speak to the rock, and he struck it. Moses thought, that as, on the former occasion at Horeb, he had struck the rock before it gave water, so it was needful that he should again strike the rock; and in so doing he caused the erroneous idea to possess the Israelites, that the act of striking was indispensable to the production of water; an error which would have been guarded against, had he contented himself with speaking to the rock, as he was commanded.

These two sins Moses is reproached with, when the Lord says to him,

(*To be continued.*)

"Die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel, at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel." (Deut. xxxii. 50, 51.) The first, "because ye transgressed against me," is in reference to their positive disobedience. And the second, "because ye sanctified me not," relates to their want of faith. And as the only expiation for not sanctifying the name of the Lord is the death of the offender: As our Rabbies declare, "neither penitence nor affliction will expiate the crime of desecrating the name of the Lord; the only sufficient atonement is the death of the offender:" (Talmud, treatise *Jonah*, folio 5:) Neither the prayers nor the penitence of Moses could avail against the decree pronounced against him, which therefore was confirmed with an asseveration.

We submit this exposition to the judgment of our readers; according to our own opinion, it is by far the most satisfactory that hitherto has been offered: but the Lord in his mercy guard us against errors. Amen.

IV. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(*Continued from page 316.*)

IN R. Jehuda Hallevi, the Jews could boast a poet of great powers and originality of genius. In Aben-Esra they have a polyhistor, alike conversant with every branch of learning cultivated in his day, and a commentator, whose unprejudiced eye pierced through the obscurities in which the diction of the Sacred Volume, at times, appears to be enveloped. But in the great man, of whose life and works we are now going to treat, they produced a profound philosopher and divine, who not only has exercised the greatest influence on his contemporaries, and

on his nation, but, also, on the civilized world in general: An influence which still, after the lapse of six centuries, is felt, and even found on the increase, the more the improvements of mankind place them on a level with a sage, whose great mind and enlightened liberality outstripped his own age, and has not yet been attained by ours.

Rabenu Moses ben Maimon, generally called *Rambam*, by the Jews, and *Maimonides*, by the learned of all other nations, was born at Cordova, at a time when the kings of Morocco governed the greater part of

Spain, and their viceroy had his seat at Cordova. The precise period of his birth is doubtful; some placing it in the year 1131, while others make him six years younger, and maintain, that he was born in 1137; but though it is now impossible to decide which of these two dates is the true one, general opinion is in favour of the first. Moses's father, R. Maimon, was judge of the Jewish community at Cordova; very learned, and descended from an ancient and distinguished family, which had, during seven successive generations, held the dignified office of דין, "judge." It appears that the learned Rabbi had, in his earlier years, contracted an ardent attachment for a woman of inferior birth, the daughter of a butcher, whom, contrary to the principles prevalent among those of his own rank and station, he had married. But as this mis-alliance caused general dissatisfaction, R. Maimon attempted to justify his having married beneath himself, through the sanction of a nocturnal vision, in which, as he alleged, he had been commanded to make this woman his wife. She died, however, in giving birth to our Moses; and as R. Maimon soon formed another matrimonial connexion, more in accordance with the received opinions of his own rank and dignity, he considered his eldest son as a lasting memento of his having derogated from his own high standing; the sight of whom, therefore, as a continued reproach, was insupportable to him. The slothful disposition of the boy, which rendered vain and useless all paternal efforts to educate him, completely alienated him from the affections of his father, who, in a moment of passion, severely chastised him, and called him a butcher-boy. The pride of Moses could not brook such treatment, even from a parent; he ran away from the paternal home, and the first refuge he sought was in a house of prayer. There he fell asleep; and when he awoke, a sudden resolution seized him, to throw off his habits of idleness, and, by industry and intense application, to render himself worthy of a long line of dignified and virtuous ancestry. Full of this resolve, he took the road to Lucena, where

he was received and admitted as a pupil. Opinions are at variance whether Maimonides profited by the instruction of R. Joseph ben Megas, or of his son R. Meir; but, as the former is known to have died in the year 1141, a time when our Moses could not possibly have been more than ten years of age, it is the latter who probably is entitled to the honour of having been the teacher of the great Rambam.

The youthful student continued at Lucena until he had made considerable progress in the manifold branches of learning then taught at that celebrated school. The general confusion which then prevailed throughout the Moorish dominions in Spain, in consequence of the persecutions to which Abd-Alnumen,* in his zeal for the propagation of Islamism, subjected the Jews,—persecutions which raged with particular severity at Cordova, under the immediate eye of the African despot,—formed a fair excuse for the father, if he neglected to seek after his son, or asserted that his pretended researches were fruitless. When, therefore, R. Moses, about the year 1150, returned to his native city, he did not take up his residence in the paternal home, but left his father ignorant of his arrival, while he addressed himself to strangers, to whose kindness he had been recommended by his benevolent teacher at Lucena. Through their influence, he obtained permission to address the congregation in the synagogue on the Sabbath after his arrival. His father was present, and shared the admiration which the eloquence of the young Rabbi excited in his audience. But how great was the astonishment of R. Maimon, and of the greatest part of the auditory, when, after the conclusion of his learned and impressive address, the orator approached the venerable judge, and, kneeling before him, implored his paternal benediction. R. Maimon recognised his long-lost son; the voice of nature, the emotions of the moment, and the feelings of paternal pride and delight, with which he heard him, hailed, and justly hailed, as the rising light of Israel, overcame the rooted aversion of years, and the strong repugnance

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. ii., p. 231.

engendered by self-reproach. He embraced him, and, amidst the exclamations and congratulations of the affected congregation, he conducted him to his home. Restored to the affections of his father, from which mistaken pride alone had estranged him, R. Moses, with redoubled ardour, returned to his studies; in the Talinudic branches of which, he, according to his own confession, was guided by the experience of R. Maimon, by which he profited greatly; while, at the same time, in order to perfect his knowledge of the Arabic language, of astronomy, mathematics, and medicine, he frequented the schools of the learned Moors, Ibn Tophail and Ibn Saig, and particularly that of the great Averroes.

The latter, whose full name was Abd-allah Mohamed Ebn Omar Ebn Roshd, was, unquestionably, the greatest Arabian philosopher of that or of any other age. He resembles our Maimonides, not only in the duration of his life, (for, like him, he was born in 1131, and died about the year 1206,) but also in many of the events and vicissitudes of life; in his love of learning, and in the bitter hatred and malignant calumnies to which his philosophy exposed him. The father of Averroes was chief *cadi*, or judge, at Cordova; in which dignity he was succeeded by his son, who was greatly respected by the king of Morocco, at that time sovereign of a great part of Spain. Abd-almumen, in particular, was very partial to Averroes, whom he advanced to high honours. As Averroes was very rich and charitable, he was generally beloved; at least, so long as his means permitted him to indulge in that active benevolence which formed his chief delight. His great learning, and his profound investigations of the Aristotelian system of philosophy, assembled round him a great number of pupils: So that his fame and celebrity surpassed that of all his learned contemporaries among the Arabs. This exposed him to the envy and hatred of many influential men, which increased when he was summoned to Morocco, in order to be invested with the dignity of chief judge of the whole kingdom, still retaining his office at Cordova.

This unexampled advancement, and the fact that one individual should be entrusted with two such important offices, raised the rancour of his enemies to the highest pitch. He did not long stay in Africa, but, returning to Cordova, he resumed his wonted occupations: when his enemies succeeded in introducing into his confidence several of their emissaries, who, as his pupils, contrived to possess themselves of his most secret thoughts, and then betrayed him. In an act of accusation, signed by one hundred witnesses, he was taxed with heresy, with infidelity, and that, despising the doctrines of the Islam, he was a believer in natural religion only, which he professed and taught to others. Almanzar, the successor of Abd-almumen, condemned him to the loss of his dignities and property, which decree was immediately executed. Averroes fled, and concealed himself among the Jews; it is even asserted, that the house of Maimonides was the asylum in which he sought to escape the rage of his persecutors. After having for some time remained in concealment, he ventured abroad; he was, however, recognised, most grossly insulted, and his personal safety so greatly endangered, that he fled to Fez. Here he was again recognised, seized, and carried as a prisoner to Morocco, where he was tried, and condemned to die; which sentence, however, the king commuted into imprisonment and recantation. Averroes was placed at the door of the great mosque, where he was obliged to stand, his head uncovered, and he spit at by every orthodox Mussulman, who entered the house of prayer. The president of the tribunal then read aloud the heresies of which Averroes had become guilty, and asked him whether he recanted such tenets? He replied by confessing his errors; and, abjuring them, he requested to be re-admitted into the community of the faithful. His request was then granted, and he was set at liberty, and permitted to return to Cordova, where he continued to live in great poverty and distress, until Joseph ben Jacob, king of Morocco, dissatisfied with his chief *cadi*, or judge, recalled

Averroes to his court, and re-instated him in his former office and dignities; which he continued, uninterruptedly, to hold during the remainder of his life, a period of nearly forty years.

Maimonides, gifted by nature with talents of the very highest order, instructed in every branch of science then known by his teachers at Lucena, became a perfect Talmudist through the guidance of his experienced father, and a profound philosopher through the lessons and example of Averroes. But while his master, with a mind too strong to be misled by the impostures of the Islam, embraced the imperfect dogmas of natural theology, Maimonides—reared in a better faith, the truth of Divine Revelation and belief in the sacred volume of Scripture deeply impressed on his soul,—employed all the powers of his great mind to solve and remove those apparent difficulties which present themselves to the reader of the Sacred Scriptures. But, preparatory to this great undertaking, he deemed it his duty to simplify as much as possible the various observances and enactments which had arisen from the oral or traditional law. For this purpose he, in the twenty-third year of his age, commenced to write, in Arabic, an exposition of the Mishna; which he completed before his thirtieth year. But, during this interval, he had frequented the school and society of Averroes; so that, when the storm burst over the head of this devoted victim, Maimonides was accused of having shared the deistical opinions of his friend and teacher, was exposed to all the calumnies which malice could invent, and to all the persecution which mistaken zeal could inflict. And when, subsequently, it was discovered that his was the house in which Averroes had found an asylum, the ill-feeling harboured against Maimonides, both by Jews and Moors, increased to that

degree that he was obliged to fly from Cordova, about the year 1160.

It has been reported that, during his flight, he professed himself a Mussulman, and conformed to the outward observances of Islamism. This was even, at an after-period of his life, made a subject of accusation against him, before Saladdin, sultan of Egypt, at whose court Maimonides held the office of physician-in-chief. The favour in which he was justly held by that monarch had excited the jealousy of the Moslem physicians, who, alike envious of his fame and fortune, sought not to emulate or to surpass him in talents, but strove, by mean intrigues and foul calumny, to ruin him in the good opinion of his royal master. Among the many attempts they made for that purpose, the one they considered most certain of success with the rigidly orthodox Saladdin was, to accuse Maimonides of being a two-fold renegade; who, after having embraced the doctrines of the Islam, had relapsed into Judaism. Maimonides indignantly repelled the accusation; whether justly or not, it is, at this distance of time, impossible to decide. Certain it is, that the accusation failed; probably because not supported by sufficient evidence. It is even said, that the sultan, while he affected to believe the truth of the accusation, justified the conduct of Maimonides, and maintained, that a man might, in a season of extreme peril, disguise his real sentiments to preserve his life. But from all that is known of the character of Saladdin, who was a rigid (not to say a fanatical) believer in the Koran, it is not probable that he would have extenuated the conduct of his physician, or that the latter would have escaped the penalty of his tergiversation, had there been sufficient proofs of his guilt; or, had the monarch not placed greater faith in the denial of the accused, than in the malignant assertions of the accusers.

(To be continued.)

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I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 324.)

BEN ZOMA said, "Who is truly wise? He who is willing to receive instruction from all men: As it is written, 'From all my teachers I gather understanding:' Who is truly a hero? He who subdues his own passions: As it is said, 'He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he who governeth his own temper, than he who taketh a city.' Who is truly happy? He who is contented with his lot: As it is said, 'When thou shalt eat of the labour of thy hands, then happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.' Happy shalt thou be in this world, and it shall be well with thee in the world to come. Who is truly honourable? He who honoureth the human species: As it is written, 'For them who honour me will I honour, and they who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.'"

COMMENTARY. *Ben Zoma said*—The name of this youthful *tanai* was Simeon; but as he died ere he had obtained the *סמיכה*, or inauguration, and the title of Rabbi, he is not called by his own name, but by that of his father. The reason why he is not called by his own name alone, without the appendage of Rabbi, is to be found in the order of rank, observed in the titles of the *tanaim*, *amoraim*, and *saburaim*. It is worthy of observation, that, each of these three distinct classes of teachers considered itself as inferior to their immediate predecessors. Thus the *amoraim* assigned the honourable title of *חכמים*, "sages," to the *tanaim*, while they themselves were content with the modest designation of *תלמידי חכמים*, "disciples of the sages;" an appellation which they justly merited, inasmuch as they devoted their time, talents, and energies to illustrate the doctrines and sayings of their great precursors and teachers. The *saburaim* who modestly followed the example of the *amoraim*, do not lay claim to either

of these distinguished epithets, but call themselves simply "teachers and commentators," *רבנן סבוראים*.

Among the *tanaim*, the highest rank belongs to those who stand nearest in succession to the inspired men of the Great Assembly. They are called simply by their names; sometimes the name of their father is added, and sometimes a cognomen, derived either from their personal qualities or from their place of birth; but in no case is the title Rabbi appended to their names, which are of themselves considered as sufficient distinctions; of these illustrious men the first is Simon the Just, and the last were Hillel and Shammai, contemporaries of Herod the Great.

Shortly before the destruction of the second temple, the title of *רבן* "Rabban" was introduced: It was, however, only given to the *nassi*, principal, or chief of the school, and was, consequently, the highest title that could be bestowed on an individual. About the same time the designation *רבי*, "Rabbi," came in vogue; which applied to the latter

tanaim as well as to the *amoraim*, and was generally bestowed on every one who had received the ספיכה, or had been inducted into the office of teacher. But the *saburaim*, not conceiving themselves entitled to perfect equality even in this respect, abridged the title into רב "Rab," which is inferior in dignity to Rabbi.

From what has been here stated, it appears, that those *tanaim* mentioned in the treatise *Aboth* by their names only, without the title of Rabbi appended thereto, were nearest in succession to the men of the Great Assembly, and considered as more illustrious than their successors: And as Simeon, the son of Zoma, who lived after the destruction of the temple, was not one of these elder *tanaim*, and died ere he had obtained the ספיכה, which entitled him to the designation of Rabbi, it was deemed more advisable to call him by the name of his father only, than to call him by his own name, without the customary title, which might in after-ages have been productive of confusion. These remarks likewise apply to the name, "the son of Azai," whom we find mentioned in a subsequent paragraph, whose name, likewise, was Simeon, and who also died ere he had obtained the title of Rabbi.

Who is truly wise, &c.—The question is, Who is the truly wise man? who is so often mentioned in Holy Writ, and always in terms of praise and commendation? As for instance, "The instruction of the wise is a fountain of life to escape from the snares of death." (Proverbs xiii. 14.) "Wise men lay up knowledge." (Proverbs x. 14.) "Better is a poor child that is wise, than an old and foolish king," &c. (Ecclesiastes iv. 13.) "For thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do with him," &c. (1 Kings ii. 9.) And numerous other passages; but in no one instance do we find this qualification used as a term of contumely or vituperation. We are not to suppose that the wise man who is mentioned in Holy Writ, is the man of great knowledge, and enlightened understanding; or the studious man, who is conversant with philosophy,

mathematics, physics, and other sciences that adorn the human mind, so that all knowledge, sacred or profane, is alike accessible to him, for he can penetrate into the spirit of the Divine laws, which he illustrates and explains according to his own profound judgment and great acuteness; and while all men profit by his inexhaustible erudition, he dispenses his stores to every one, and is indebted to no man; for what can any human being teach this universal sage, with which he is not previously acquainted? But it is not such a man with all his great talents and transcendent capabilities, whom Holy Writ deigns to call truly wise. That epithet is only bestowed on him who conforms to the precepts of the Divine law, and subdues his desires until they become in every respect subordinate to his duties. And though such a man may not shine with any very brilliant endowments, and may have no claims to superior knowledge or understanding, still he, and he only, is deemed worthy of the designation "truly wise;" inasmuch as he has made choice of that portion which endureth for ever, and which alone can advance a man to that true perfection which is the end and aim of his being. This species of wisdom is, therefore, infinitely superior to mere worldly knowledge, as it exercises the most decided influence on all a man's actions, and is not merely theoretical, but most important in practice; for it is not an acquaintance with the Divine precepts, and a knowledge of the tenets and doctrines of the law, which deserve the appellation of true wisdom. It is the practice of these precepts; it is the application made of these tenets and doctrines to the ordinary occurrences of life; it is regulating our conduct according to the beneficent spirit which pervades these Divine institutes, and on every occasion squaring our actions by the rule which they present to us; it is the truly virtuous and pious course of life which must thence result, that deserves the commendations which the Sacred Scriptures on all occasions bestow on true wis-

dom. One of the necessary consequences which result from this true wisdom is, that man attains to a proper estimate of himself, and of his own worth and powers; that, consequently, he is humble, and possessed of that spirit of meekness, which, as it is his first duty, is the aggregate and perfection of all his duties. This spirit of meekness will stamp its impress on his mind, not only in his communion with that all-perfect and infinite Being, "who sitteth on the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers, that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes of the earth to nothing, he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity." Not only towards this inexpressibly great Being, will the truly wise man be penetrated with humility; but even in his intercourse with his earth-born brethren, every feeling of vanity or pride will be banished far from his heart and mind. The accidents of birth and rank, the casual advantages of wealth and distinction, will not inflate his mind; but while he pays every respect to those gradations, the existence of which is indispensable to the welfare of society, he will look upon all mankind as his brethren, and feel that no man is so far beneath him, but that he can derive some improvement and instruction from the experience, conversation, and example of the most lowly individual he meets with. Nor is it from the good alone, that the truly wise man will endeavour to profit for his own advancement in the path of perfection; even the most worthless character, who, immersed in crime and sensuality, is the slave of his passions, presents to the mind of the truly wise a lesson not the less impressive or instructive, because it is awful. For while the precepts of the good confirm him in his determination to abide by the strict path of his duty, and teach him more clearly how to understand and obey the revealed will of his Creator, the example of the bad opens his eyes to the fearful consequence of vice, shows him how, by degrees, the dominion of evil desires extends

itself over the soul, and how, from slighting minute observances, the importance of which may appear questionable to the superficial inquirer, man may, and does, gradually diverge from the positive laws of his Maker, until he forfeits his true happiness, and sinks into the abyss of crime.

Therefore it is that the Sacred Singer tells us, "From all my teachers I gather understanding;" not from the good alone, but from the bad likewise; not from intellectual nature only, but from all creation, animate or inanimate. Every object in nature is capable of affording instruction to the truly wise, of strengthening his love and admiration of the Creator, and his obedience to the will of God. For every object in nature points out to him the spirit of beneficence, of wisdom, and of order which presided at the creation; the obvious intention that every creature should be happy in his own sphere, and contribute to the happiness of the whole. The largest, as the smallest object in the universe, attests alike the wisdom, power, and beneficence of the Deity, which is as fully evinced in the ephemeral butterfly, which, borne aloft on its many-coloured wings, basks in the meridian splendour of the sun; the parting rays of which closes its short-lived career; as in the huge whale, whose breath agitates the sea, or in the mighty elephant, beneath whose heavy tread the forest glade does tremble. Well might the enraptured Psalmist exclaim, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches." (Psalm civ. 24.) For David, who was truly wise, to whom the contemplation of his God was ever the dearest and most important occupation, and who, though a mortal, and as such exposed to error and sin, was, nevertheless, so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of genuine piety and virtuous devotion, that even his misdeeds became to him and to others most salutary lessons; while his sincere contrition, and heartfelt penitence, evince the goodness and mercy of his and our supreme Judge. This truly wise man did not permit any

object in nature to escape him, but derived instruction and improvement from each. His example it is which our teacher most strongly recommends to our imitation, when he supports his concise, but true and valuable, maxim, "Who is truly wise? He that is willing to receive instruction from every man;" by the words of the Sacred Singer, "From all my teachers I gather understanding;" words, which plainly demonstrate what is the true wisdom to which our teacher alludes. For knowledge of the sciences is not to be obtained from every one; but few men are capable of setting up as teachers of

the arts, or as instructors in the various branches of study, which form the occupations of the learned, or influence the state of society. But lessons of virtue and piety, instruction in the fear and knowledge of God, are to be obtained from every man and from every object in nature; and these, therefore, are the component parts of that true wisdom which is to be obtained and attained by him whose mind, meek and virtuous, is not above learning from the lowly, and to become improved by the example of the erring, as by the pattern and precepts of the good.

(To be continued.)

II. ARE THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE JEWS ANTI-SOCIAL?

(Continued from page 328.)

THE mere resident alien, however, was not qualified to hold any office in the Hebrew commonwealth. He that is to see the laws of a country executed, ought to know them; and it would therefore have been unwise to entrust the Mosaic Institutions, so peculiarly and essentially different from those of contemporary nations, to the care of an idolater. Since, moreover, public offices were honorary, and not lucrative occupations, only such as had an immediate interest in the maintenance of the laws could be called upon to fulfil the arduous duties of a functionary. That this cannot imply contempt for the alien, is sufficiently demonstrated by the provision, that Heathens could, on abjuring their errors, be admitted into the congregation of the people, and enjoy the full blessings of living under the dispensation of Moses. On renouncing idolatry, as subversive of the system established among the people of God, the alien's native land had no influence whatever on his social position among the Hebrews. The *gher*, hitherto called *toshab*, "resident," was thenceforward denominated *gher hamishpat*, "stranger of justice;" or, rather, "a stranger, belonging to the jurisdiction of the country." Conversion, therefore, instead of being forced upon the strangers, whom necessity or preference had led into Judea,

was only granted them at their own request. The Rabbies have preserved the formalities imposed upon the stranger, previous to his incorporation with the body of Israel; all of which are rather calculated to deter than to allure any Gentile whom weak motives might have led to the abandonment of the creed in which he was reared. He was solemnly introduced into the presence of three judges, (sacerdotal or secular, according to circumstances,) who proposed to him unequivocal questions as to the reasons which induced him to embrace Mosaism. Nothing short of an unbiassed conviction of the preference due to the law of God before that of the Heathens, was deemed proper to render his conversion acceptable. The multifarious and important obligations incumbent on the Hebrew were minutely retraced to the neophyte, and nothing omitted to withhold him from entering into engagements which he might not be strong enough to fulfil at the different windings on his road through life. This is the mode still followed at the present day, whenever a Gentile desires to become a member of the congregation of Israel; and justifies the Jews in the assertion, that there are no proselytes in the world so sincere as those who enter into the brotherhood of the wandering people of Israel. The history of the Jews presents very

few examples of any contravention to these maxims. The Asmonean princes, indeed, forced the conquered nations to become Jews or to leave the country; but they acted from motives of policy, which their immediate posterity found to be highly detrimental to the state; for the newly-conquered and incorporated Idumean provinces gave birth to the family of Herod, who treated the Jews with all the selfish feelings of strangers, after having, by craft and foreign aid, possessed themselves of the supreme authority. Two of the children of Jacob made proselytism the means of perpetrating a horrid crime, in which they have but too frequently been imitated; but, with pious indignation, they are inveighed against by the sainted patriarch: "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be thou not united! for in their anger they slew a man," &c. (Genesis xlix. 6.)

What has induced sciolists to believe, that the Jews compelled all the nations under their sway to become converts to the laws of Moses, may be found in the ordinance reported in the Talmud, that the Jews commanded, in all countries where they had acquired the supremacy, the observance of the Noachite laws, so called, from their having, according to tradition, been enjoined by the Deity on the children of Noah after the flood, as a binding obligation on all the nations of the earth. They are seven in number, and decreed: 1. To abstain from homicide. 2. From incest. 3. From theft. 4. From sacrificing to idols. 5. From the mutilating of animals. 6. From blasphemy; and, 7. They enjoin the dispensation of justice according to fixed laws, and not after the arbitrary will of an individual. The morality of all these laws cannot, for a moment, be questioned; nor can any one suppose that it was interfering with the true liberty of the conquered people to force such duties upon them, if, as in those days well might have been the case, they were previously ignorant of them. Nor can it be disputed, that the violation of the Noachite laws was countenanced in countries which are, even

in the present day, by the lovers of the paradoxical, held up to our admiration, as was the case with theft at Sparta. But it would have been a moral impossibility to preserve the purity of the Mosaic law, if the Jews could have had any intercourse with people who were immersed in such deep barbarity and inhumanity as the non-observance of the Noachite laws would imply; and it would have been shameful to allow such practices in a land standing under the control of the chosen people. Besides, the only Noachite law which could be said to relate to any particular religion is the prohibition of sacrificing to idols. Now sacrifice is not only an outward act, but also a public one, and, as such, stands under the cognizance of the constituted political authority; and the adoration of the invisible Unity was so much an essential part of the existence of Hebrew nationality, that every infringement of this sacred principle would inevitably have struck a fatal blow at the constitution.

Let us but cast a cursory glance over the customs of some of the most approved of commonwealths of profane antiquity, respecting the treatment of foreigners, and we shall have no difficulty to find out by the comparison, which are the most conducive to peace, charity, and good understanding between man and man. At Sparta, strangers received peremptory orders to leave the city almost immediately after their arrival. They not only treated the Helots, who were enslaved Greeks from a neighbouring province, very cruelly, but forced those wretched tools of Spartan haughtiness to deny all decency inherent to man, by giving themselves up to the horrors of intoxication, and in this degraded state they made them serve as a spectacle to the eyes of the Lacedæmonian youth. At Athens, every stranger had to choose a patron among the native citizens, who was held responsible for all the charges incurred by the alien; in default of this precaution, the goods of strangers were confiscated. They were, moreover, obliged to pay an annual tribute to the Athenian treasury, and

their liberty was forfeited, in case of contravention. At religious processions, the Athenian ladies were screened from the heat of the sun by parasols extended over them by female strangers, to show the superiority of the natives. Strangers were, moreover, continually galled by sarcastic and mortifying invectives cast upon them and their respective nations, by the wits of the day, who vented their malevolent humour on them upon the stage. Much more of a similar nature attracted the notice of Anarchasis during his travels through Greece, to which we refer the curious. Were it our task to make charges on others, instead of repelling those preferred against us, we should find materials enough for deeply criminating the proceedings of much more modern nations towards the strangers who lived among them. But as such is not our aim, we shall next examine the dictates of the most revered of our authorities, on our duties towards those nations who are witnesses to our present low condition.

Upwards of two thousand four hundred years ago, the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with numbers of Levites, were carried away to Babylon by force; and although the moral worth of individual Jews gained them the respect of the Assyrian court, the Jewish people in general had to suffer all the ignominy which falls to the lot of the unhappy in the grasp of the ignorant and haughty barbarian. "They wept on the borders of the stream," as the Psalm expresses it, in strains of patriotic pathos, when they thought of Zion. No doubt, their privations were many, their alleviations few. Still, notwithstanding the indignation with which every Jew must have viewed the overbearing spirit of the idolater, the prophet Jeremiah, conscious that the discord and the sins of the Israelites themselves, but not the superiority of Babel, had achieved the victory for Nebuchadnezzar, writes them an epistle of the following tenor: "Build ye houses, and dwell in them, and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; take ye wives and beget sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and

give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there and not diminished, and seek the peace of the city, whither I have caused you to be carried away captive," says the Lord; "for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." If such are the duties of the Hebrew in the land of the enemy who had torn him by violence from his home, and destroyed his holy temple, what friendship and love are sufficient to requite the charity of those whose shelter and protection we have sought and received in the hour of need?

The Rabbies, against whom so much vociferation has been wasted, the accusations against whom have been carefully preserved, while their defences have been burnt, have left us maxims which we have reason to wish may not only live on the memory, but also be visible in the acts of every Hebrew. "Every Israelite," says Maimonides, "ought to treat the resident Gentile, in his civil intercourse, precisely as he would a brother Israelite. We are commanded to sustain their wants; we are obliged to visit their sick; to bury their dead; to distribute gifts to their poor, as well as to the destitute of our brethren, for the sake of peace." Will it be believed, that the words, "for the sake of peace," have been made the detestable instrument of cavil, by sophistically interpreting them: "For the sake of peace only?" Fear, we are told by those hunters-up of low motives, "fear dictated this precept to the Rabbies; they recommended charity towards Gentiles, because they stood in awe of the physical force of those whom, if circumstances were different, they would bestow no charity upon. Maimonides plainly says, 'for the sake of peace.' Therefore, remove the fear of aggression, and the Jews would not seek the peace of the Gentiles." The soundness of such reasoning may be duly estimated, by applying it to the above-mentioned laws, not only commanded to, but really practised by, the Jews when aloof from all fear at the numerical and physical superiority of the Gentiles; but the malevolence and wryness of the

sophistry are obvious to the intelligence of all who know that the most cordial greeting passed by one Jew to the other, is, "Peace be unto thee!"

Is it reasonable to suppose, that, intimidated at his own brother, the Jew salutes the Jew through fear, and that, if he were not afraid at him, he would not offer him peace? Those words, left us in their patriarchal simplicity by our forefathers, were never pronounced when an idea of dread ruffled the mind of the Hebrew; but are, and ought to be, a heartfelt wish, that the blessings of peace be showered upon the brother we see before us; and, in the same sense, charity is to be practised towards every member of the human species, that the sweets of peace and good understanding may flow abundantly, and hasten the day promised in our Holy Pages, when discord shall be choked in its own venom. Here follow the reasons given by Maimonides himself as the sanction for the rules of charity towards the Gentile: "For it is written, that 'God is good towards all; that His tender mercy is extended over all His works; that all His ways are pleasant, and all His paths lead to peace.'

"The foreign Gentile, *Nocri*, is to be greeted once; but the salutation to a Jew, or resident Gentile, ought to be repeated once more, to denote the greater affinity. A Gentile who observes the law is, by the Talmud, declared to have attained to greater merit than the High Priest. A Jew, on hearing a Gentile offer up his prayers to his God in his own way, is to say, 'Amen.'"
A brilliant proclamation of the principles of the orthodox faith has been issued by the Sanhedrin, convoked at Paris, in the year 1807, by command of the emperor Napoleon, who, from his own experience, wanted to examine the doctrines of the Jews, in consequence of the many prejudices afloat against them, previous to admitting them to the rank of citizens, on an equality with his other subjects. He, for this purpose, convened an assembly of seventy of the most learned Jews on the continent, whom he ordered to draw up a complete *résumé* of the

obligations of the Hebrews towards the states they live under. Their work is extant; and it induced the Emperor, who, if he sometimes profited by prejudices, certainly never was the dupe of any, to emancipate the Jews wherever he exercised sovereign sway. The favourable treatment experienced by the Jews, during the reign of Buonaparte and his family, over a large tract of Germany and Holland, inspired them with that deep admiration of that great man, and that interest in his fate, which the Jews have ever evinced towards their benefactors: Witness their grief at the death of Cæsar, related by Suetonius; their attachment to pope Clement VI., who humanely afforded them protection; and the funeral honours they sincerely paid to their benefactor, St. Hilaire, bishop of Arles, as described in M. Gregoire's *Histoire des Sectes Religieuses*. Still, when the people of Germany rose to expel the French from their borders, the Jews of Germany forgot not their duties towards the natives of the land that had given them birth, (we cannot say,—their countrymen,) and firmly united their efforts, with those of the Germans, to shake off the foreign yoke. The glorious years of enthusiasm passed away; and the sacrifices made, the heroic exploits achieved, by Jews, which no one attempts to deny, were but ill-requited by the seditious and persecuting cries raised against them, in the year 1819, in the most populous towns of enlightened Germany. Even now, their echo strikes fearfully on our ear. But let us turn from such scenes and sounds of outrage, and hope, that the day of comfort is not far distant.

Although the decisions of the Sanhedrin are well known in this country, an introduction of a few of their articles will not be found irrelevant to our subject. The grand Sanhedrin,—having observed, that the notions entertained by the people, among whom the Israelites have fixed their abode some centuries, are not clear enough to enable them to judge with any degree of competence; and that, conse-

quently, they are dubious of the sentiments of fraternity and sociability harboured by the Jews towards them; whether the Hebrews consider their Christian countrymen as brethren or merely as strangers;—the grand Sanhedrin, in order to remove every controversy on this point, declare: That by virtue of the law given by Moses unto the children of Israel, they are, at all times, held to consider as brethren the individuals of all nations who acknowledge a God, Creator of heaven and earth, and all those among whom they enjoy the advantage of civil society, or only the benefits of hospitality: That the holy law commands us to love our neighbour like ourselves: That, in consequence of this doctrine, concerning which there exists not the least dispute among the Rabbies whose authority we recognise, and with which every Hebrew who arrives at a mediocre knowledge of his religion becomes conversant, it is our unlimited duty to aid, protect, and love our countrymen, and to behave towards them, in every civil and moral respect, as if they were adherents to the law of Moses. The explicit declaration of these pious and enlightened men, whose sincerity will appear unexceptionable to those who know, that the desire of obtaining political advantages never caused the Jews to put any violence upon their laws, or wilfully to misconstrue them, ought to be strong enough to convince the most sceptical of the fallacy of the accusation raised against us; and that any thing but love of truth could have dictated the calumnies which have been brought to bear upon an inoffensive people. If any proof were wanted of the excellence of the laws which God vouchsafed to promulgate to the children of Israel, we should find it in the state of morality in which the Jews still live, after having been nearly one thousand eight hundred years exposed to all the dangers of corruption, demoralization, and lawlessness.

During the brilliant epoch of the Moors in Spain, Jews ranked high among their officers of state, and in the fifteenth century, the Rabbi Abarbanel, celebrated among his brethren

as a most able commentator of the Scriptures, was successively minister under four Christian kings, and shared at last the fate of banishment with his royal master, Alphonso II. of Naples, when the French dispossessed him of his dominions. Since the regeneration of more liberal ideas in Europe, the Jews took an active share in increasing the wealth, and the spread of learning wherever they were allowed to give scope to their capacities, and they have always abstained from such atrocities as have, among so many tribes, been the offspring of oppression. We attribute the causes of the honourable exception, which the Jews make among expatriated nations, solely to the tenets of our holy dispensation, and claim for the Jews, as a people, only the merit of having felt the paramount importance of holding fast by these laws, of rather foregoing all earthly advantages, than renouncing one tittle of that code, which they have received entire from their fathers, and to leave it unblemished to their sons. If, notwithstanding the proofs we have brought of the charitable and philanthropic spirit of Judaism, phrases here and there scattered through the writings of a Rabbi of the middle ages may still be culled out as glorious trophies in the hands of our antagonists, we shall answer, that every one of those opinions has been disputed and confuted by contemporary or subsequent teachers; that a man writhing under the lash of the oppressor cannot be held responsible for every word he may utter in his despair; that such a saying of a Rabbi constitutes no authority for Jews, whenever a contradiction to the objectionable principles can be produced, in writings of the same epoch and of greater weight, supported by inference from our written law, which lies open to the investigation of mankind, and from which no Rabbi must depart, if his opinions are to be honoured by Jews. Although it would not tend to the justification of illiberal doctrines in the Rabbies, (if any there were,) were we to show, that similar or stronger aberrations from cosmopolitanism are to be met with in the writings and precepts even of founders of well-known and

widely extended modern sects; still this consideration ought to impose silence on men, who are most forward in the attack on writers they do not understand.

Whoever ranges through a garden teeming with pleasant flowers, should not indulge in the low gratification of showing his sagacity, by finding a weed in a recess, which, when he exults at his discovery, may be proved to him to contain some medicinal virtue he was far from expecting to meet with in the unsightly plant. Such, however, has invariably been the fate of those who most zealously attacked the Jewish doctrine, whenever their statements were put to the test of critical investigation; pretended maxims of anti-sociality were clearly pointed out to be sound principles of justice, founded on the system of reciprocity; what was denounced as absurdity in the Talmud has been proved to be a sublime allegory, and to be taken as such by every educated orthodox Jew, whereof the learned work by Mr. Hurwitz, on the "Hebrew Apologues," is an incontrovertible evidence. That acts, discreditable not only to a Hebrew, but to the veriest Heathen, have been, and are still, perpetrated by professed Jews, we will not undertake to deny; but we vigorously protest against the slightest attempt at tracing these misdeeds to our institutions, to which they stand in direct opposition, and we adduce as our guarantee the above-quoted decisions of the Pari-

sian Sanhedrin, (art. 5, 1807:) "Every individual professing the religion of Moses, who does not practise justice and charity towards all men, independently of their particular creed, sins notoriously against his law. The Ten Commandments and Holy Books, which contain the Divine statutes in question, establish no particular relation, indicate no quality, condition, or religion, of those towards whom these duties are to be observed; so that every Israelite who transgresses them to the injury of any one individual, is criminal before God. This doctrine has unceasingly been preached by the teachers of the law, in order to inspire us with the love of the Creator and the created. There is a multiplicity of evidence in the prophets, that Israel is by no means the enemy to those who live under another religious system." These are the principles which it behoves the Rabbies and teachers of Israel to inculcate on the minds of their flocks, wherever the Word of God is read to Hebrew hearers; for on no point will they find stronger corroborations and less controversy in the writings which constitute the standard of our conduct; and by their mighty aid the vindication of Israel will be established everlastingly: "An hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbour; but through knowledge shall the just be delivered." (Prov. xi. 9.)

H. M. B.

III. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 333.)

CHAPTER XXIII.

THERE are some words, the positive meaning of which is expressive of good qualities, without any admixture whatever of evil. There are other words, the positive meaning of which is expressive of bad qualities, without any admixture of good; and some words there are which are descriptive of either good or bad qualities, one or other of which preponderates according to the manner in which these words are applied. Words of the first description, such as

righteous, just, good, merciful, and the like, we may apply to the Deity, and address to him in our prayers. Words of the second description, such as wicked, cruel, unmerciful, unjust, and the like, we may not apply to the Deity, nor address to him in our prayers. Those words, which are mostly understood in a good sense, we may only address to the Deity, in case we find that they have been used in that manner by any one of the prophets or inspired writers of the Sacred Volume. As an instance of such words, we men-

tion חסר, which, in the general meaning and acceptation, is applied to good qualities; but as we do find it used in a contrary sense in Holy Writ, as פֶּן יחסר שובע, "lest he that heareth it put thee to shame;" (Proverbs xxv. 10;) and, again, חסר הוא. "It is a wicked thing;" (Leviticus xv. 17;) we would not dare apply it to the Deity, if we had not found it declared in Scripture: "For I am חסר, gracious, saith the Lord, and will not keep anger for ever," (Jeremiah iii. 25;) and on the strength of this warranty we do apply this word to the Deity, and address it to Him in our prayers. But there are some words, which, in their general meaning and application, are of a derogatory nature, and which therefore may, in no case, apply to the Deity, although we do find that such words have been so applied in Scripture. Such are the words, "And it grieved Him in his heart." (Genesis vi. 6.) And again, "And his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." (Judges x. 17.) Still we are not permitted to make use of such expressions in our prayers, or to supplicate the Deity, to be grieved in his heart for us, or to be grieved in his soul for our misery.

From what we have here stated, it becomes evident that man is not at liberty to make use of any epithets, or assign any qualities, to the Deity, other than such for the use of which he has the warranty of the prophets and other inspired writers of the Sacred Volume. Accordingly the Sage Monarch cautions us against precipitancy of expression, and against innovations on the received forms of prayer, when he says, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou art upon earth; therefore let thy words be few." (Proverbs v. 1.) His meaning is: "Do not rashly and conceitedly depart from those set forms of prayer which wise and pious men have established, and the expressions they have introduced on the authority of Holy Writ, and the warranty of prophets and inspired writers. Do not let thy vanity or self-conceit tempt thee to substitute the crude concep-

tions of thine own feeble mind, or to prefer them to the liturgy ordained by wiser and better men than thou art; for remember that if thou too wilt abide by the authority, and be guided by the directions, of Holy Writ, the expressions made use of by thee in thy orisons must needs agree with theirs; and that if thou wilt be guided by thine own conceptions only, and dost not abide by the prescriptive rules of Holy Writ, "thou art upon earth;" thy faculties are finite, thy ideas are terrestrial, thy whole being is earthly, and therefore thou art utterly incapable to understand the attributes of All-perfection, or to frame an address worthy of that Being, who is all-bounteous, all-wise, and almighty. "Therefore let thy words be few. Address Him in words and expressions which He has himself inspired, and which are recorded on the pages of Holy Writ, but let thine own words be few, and befitting the immeasurable difference there is between His being and thine."

In order that a prayer shall in any wise be worthy of Him to whom it is addressed, or be at all acceptable to Him, three things are indispensably necessary. The first is, that the language be concise, clear, emphatic, and supplicatory. Prolixity must be avoided, "for the Lord seeth the heart." The second is, that it must be expressive of the real sentiments of him who prays, so that he lie not open to the denunciation of Holy Writ: "They did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." (Psalm lxxviii. 36, 37.) But when a man prays he must so frame his mind that he can, like David, exclaim, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer." (Psalm xix. 14.) The meaning being, "that, as the words to which my mouth gives utterance, and the meditations of my inmost heart, are in perfect accordance, may they alike be acceptable unto thee," &c. And, lastly, that the prayer be pronounced with humility and devotion, and in such

voice and manner as best express the profound veneration and awe which man entertains for the Lord, to whom his prayer is addressed: Accordingly, the Sacred Singer says, "Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to thee, O Lord." (Psalm xxviii. 2:) And, again: "Hear my voice, O God, in my prayers." (Psalm lxiv. 2.) But let man beware that he fall not under the reproach of the prophet, who says, "He crieth out against me, therefore have I hated it." (Jeremiah xii. 8.) These three essential requisites of prayer are enumerated by King David, (peace be with him!) in his fifth Psalm, where he says: "Give ear to my words, O Lord; consider my meditation: hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for unto thee will I pray." (Psalm v. 1, 2.) He says, "Give ear to my words," in allusion to the propriety and conciseness of his address; "consider my meditations," in allusion to the perfect accordance between the utterance of his lips and the meditations of his heart; and "hearken unto the voice of my prayer," in allusion to that devoutness and humility, in which prayer should be offered. And having thus combined the three essentials, he exclaims, "For unto thee will I pray," to tell us that any prayer which is deficient in one or other of these requisites, cannot, with propriety, be addressed to the Deity.

But, although a man does present his orisons in a proper spirit, and his supplications comprise every quality which we have enumerated, it does not follow, as a necessary consequence, that they must be acceptable to the Deity, or that the petition must at once be granted: for sometimes the petitioner has placed himself at so immense a distance from the Deity, that it is only by constant, repeated, and urgent prayer, that he can at all hope eventually to be heard. The want of this perseverance is reproached to the Israelites by the prophet, when he says, "There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth himself up to persevere in thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, thou hast consumed us, because of our iniquities." (Isaiah lxiv. 7.)

Whence it may be inferred, that if even the sinner perseveres in penitence and prayer, he will ultimately be heard; accordingly we find it stated of the inhabitants of Nineveh, "that they cried mightily unto God," (Jonah iii. 8-10,) and they were heard. In like manner our teacher Moses persevered in his urgent prayers, when he interceded for the Israelites, both on account of the golden calf and of the spies; in either case he prayed and supplicated, and did not desist until he obtained a full pardon for those in whose behalf he implored the Divine mercy.

Sometimes a man's previous conduct has been such, or the burden of his prayer is so important, that, notwithstanding his frequent and persevering supplications, he cannot be heard until he has given proofs of his penitence and devotion corresponding to the heinousness of his former offences, or the magnitude of the object he prays for: Accordingly the prophet tells us, "When you spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you: Yea, when you make many prayers I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood." (Isaiah i. 15.) Here he tells them that prayers alone, however urgent, or frequently repeated, will not avail them, because their iniquities are so great that they form a barrier between them and the Deity, which is only to be surmounted if they repent and amend their conduct, as he further says, "Wash you: make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil, learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, right the fatherless, and plead for the widow." (Isaiah i. 16, 17.) And he goes on to tell them, that if they give these proofs of their altered disposition, they will find their prayers acceptable before the mercy-seat of the Most High: "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet they shall become as white as snow," &c. (Ib. verse 18.) And of the men of Nineveh we likewise find it recorded, that they gave evident proofs of their altered disposition, of their penitence and contrition: For we read, "So the people

of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth and sat in ashes: and he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock taste any thing: let them not feed nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God; yea, let them turn every one from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell but that God will turn and repent and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" (Jonah iii. 5-9.) Here, then, we see that, in addition to their fervent prayers, the men of Nineveh humbled themselves before the Lord, and confessed their iniquities and His justice, by their fasting and sackcloth; and they evinced their penitence and sincere contrition by their turning "every one from the evil of his ways." And the result was, that "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways; and God repented of the evil that He had said that he would do unto them; and He did it not." (Jonah iii. 10.) Which, in few words, tells the sinner how he must act in order that his prayers may eventually be favourably heard.

Sometimes men, who are righteous, and who have not been guilty of any heinous offence, deem it proper to accompany their prayers with uncommon penances. Thus Daniel relates, "In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came

flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all till three whole weeks were fulfilled." (Daniel x. 2, 3.) And he is told that his penance was favourably received, as the angel who appears to him says, "From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words." (Ib. ver. 12.) But these penances are not always necessary; as the devout and fervent prayers of some men are sufficient of themselves to be heard: Accordingly the Psalmist saith, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." (Psalm xxxiv. 18.) And again, "The Lord is nigh unto all those that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." (Psalm cxlv. 18.) Some there are to whom the Divine grace is granted in so abundant a degree that they obtain even what they have not prayed for. Such are the "יִרְאֵי ה'", "God-fearing," of whom the Sacred Singer says, "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him." (Psalm cxlv. 19.) But as the God-fearing must present their orisons to the Lord of their adoration, the psalmist concludes the verse with saying, "He heareth their cry, and will save them." There are, however, some few highly favoured individuals, whom the Divine Mercy does protect, even though they do not pray. Such are the "אֲוֵהֶבָה", "beloved of the Deity:" Of whom the Psalmist saith, "The Lord preserveth all them that love Him." (Psalm clxv. 20.) This high and eminent degree was attained by our father Abraham, whom the Deity vouchsafed to designate as, Abraham, אַבְרָהָם, "my friend."

(To be continued.)

III. COMMENTARIES ON HOLY WRIT.

(Continued from page 270.)

THE EIGHTH PSALM.

IF one moment is more calculated than another to call into action every capacity of the human mind, and every emotion of the human heart, it is the still hour of night,

when the firmament is irradiated with myriads of flaming lights, moving in as many different orbits, as in a solemn procession before the ONE, who alone knows their begin-

ning and their end. The contemplative sage, removed from the din of daily turmoil, now directs his thoughts to the Almighty Father of mankind: For all the works of man are closely wrapped up in the mantle of darkness,—the emblem of that oblivion which is the lot of the proudest human achievements, after their day of brilliancy is passed; and nought is visible but the fiery characters on the vault of heaven. All earth is silent, and the empyrean speaks; golden precepts are engraven on the immeasurable page, displayed in the full view of the whole world, and the wise man ponders on them, and treasures them up in his heart, in order to distribute them to every one of his brethren, at the proper hour. The insignificance of his corporeal existence, under the threatening influence of the innumerable globes of fire, one of which would suffice to annihilate millions of earth-born creatures, preaches humility to his mind; while he is penetrated with gratitude to the Paternal Hand, which shields us from the fatal consequences of which we should be the unhappy victims, if the laws of nature were not, in the highest degree, perfect and steady. All the doubts with which the trials of this life may overcast the mind are here removed: A due idea of the finite reason entrusted to man, inspires him with the recognition of his wrong, when he had been so presumptuous as to carry his scrutinizing search into the secret laboratory of nature, to possess himself of knowledge which it is not for man to possess, and had often neglected that science which it is of the highest importance every man should be acquainted with; the science, namely, by which we learn the grandeur, the benignity and wisdom of God, and which impresses on our minds, that we are created for the practice of virtue, and the inheritance of eternal happiness.

Thus the diligent observer of the heavenly sphere receives a powerful stimulus to seek the ways of God, to relinquish the trivial acquirements of earthly goods, and his

thoughts are guided towards the Fountain of life. In this sense a modern author says,

“Astronomy, mother of Devotion!
An undevout astronomer is mad.”

The eighth Psalm was, evidently, composed by king David, when he was enjoying the delightful view of a sky, resplendent with the heavenly host. He revolved in his pious mind the glories of the Lord, and the share of power bestowed, by His will, on mortal man, whom alone He endowed with the blessings of reason, that he may see the wonders of his Maker, and be convinced, that it is his duty to repay, in some measure, the gifts of the Lord, with sincere devotion and righteousness. It appears to have been the intention of the psalmist, to express, in these verses, chiefly, his disapprobation of those who, in their attempt at scrutinizing the mysteries of the Divine government, pretend that they have arrived at the conclusion, that man has no preference over the brute creation; that chance has effected the actual state of things; and that chance may produce its change, or total discontinuance. This preposterous doctrine, calculated to throw deadly venom into the purest hearts, is as absurd as it is ungodly: For, by denying the Divine intention, in the arrangement of creation, the constant watch of the Deity over the physical and moral interests of the world is rendered impossible; thence virtue is made contemptible, unless it be the low means of obtaining momentary gratification; and vice loses its stigma, whenever it can escape present punishment. David victoriously vindicates the superiority of the children of Adam over the rest of creation. An aim far above the satisfaction of his temporary wants is assigned to man,—eternity is his inheritance; and, be it for better or for worse, enter he must. Man, possessing the highest dignity among created beings, is, consequently, with a heavy responsibility, amenable to a just tribunal. The sight of the evidences, scattered over the horizon, testifying, that the perfect order here discernible can

only be the effect of the best calculated means, put into action by an Omnipotent Cause, inspired him with the following thoughts,—

To the Chief Musician, (on the instrument,) *Gittith*, a Psalm of David.

“ETERNAL Lord, our God!
How mighty is thy name on earth,
Who art in majesty above the heavens!”

THE psalmist addresses the Deity by two titles, which convey to our understandings the attributes of his creative and conservative power. The ineffable name, denoting the eternity of the Deity, is the first, establishing the pure doctrinal principle, that the incomprehensible idea of eternity can be attached only to the Being whose conception will for ever baffle our sagacity. His pre-existence constitutes Him the first, and, consequently, the only, Cause to whom all creation owes its being. The Eternal is farther called the Lord of all nature, since it is by His constant and immutable will the whole system exists, without whose aid nothing within the realms of nature can enter into, or depart from, life, be it in a physical or moral sense; for the moral world runs in the strictest parallel with the visible world, as to its being subjected to fixed laws. However little initiated we may be into the

mysterious workings of moral events, we can plainly see, that no effect takes place without a preceding cause; hence we may justly infer, that every moral cause will be followed by its effect, here or hereafter. The admiration of the reflecting poet is raised to its climax, when he considers, that the Most High, whose throne cannot be placed on this atom of sand we call “the earth,” but whose residence is the regions of immensity, that He has still left us manifold testimonies of His presence in the minutest objects of our low dwelling-place. From the cedar to the hyssop, and from the animalcule to the whale, we discover wonders heaped upon wonders. If the excellence of man did not enter into our consideration at all, we should not be able to refuse our gratitude to God for the happiness every particle of sensitive creation appears to enjoy, and to bestow.

“By the stammering of babes and sucklings thou confirmest thy majesty,
To shame the scorner; to silence the enemy, breathing revenge.”

AFTER having spoken of the might of God, which we are moved to admire in the beings that surround us, our inspired Singer calls our attentions to ourselves; and here it principally occurs to his benevolent mind, that man, whose every expression points at a hereafter, may inquire after the voucher for this great truth. If it can therefore be made out, that man is in all higher qualifications above the brute, although, in his bodily faculties, he is only their equal, nay, their inferior, in some respects; if it can be proved, that this profusion of mental gifts would have been superfluous; if the gratification of animal

desires were the sole object of his life, since the dumb animal arrives at the same felicity, without any reasoning faculty, by the mere aid of instinct; that moreover the power of reason engages men in pursuits, of which earthly pleasures can never be the result, since the most glorious undertakings of reflecting man require for their accomplishment more than the time allotted to him for his stay on earth: The man, who denies his superiority over the irrational part of existence will, with the whole chain of propositions founded upon such a hypothesis, be compelled to own his wrong; will on mature reflection consent to evince his sense of that

superior dignity with which he stands invested, by acts worthy of his high calling, and will henceforth know himself to be a servant of God, and master of the world besides. We read this intention of the prophet in the verse before us, which Rabbi Joel Briel, the learned commentator on the translation of Mendelsohn, elucidates in the following manner: "The sceptics, or such as deny that immortality is the share of the human soul, and would by this denial remove every difference between virtue and vice, are exhorted to observe an infant, helplessly screaming in its mother's arms, destitute of every faculty to satisfy its most simple wants, in which piteous state it remains much longer than any other animal: Still this weak being grows up not so much in physical strength as in the exercise of reason, and succeeds in mastering the most ferocious animals by its superior understanding. From which we are to conclude, that the rational part of man is the most valuable, and constitutes a material difference between him and every other species of organized beings." But with all due deference to the erudition of the Rabbi, we allow ourselves to submit to the reader a different interpretation. The animadversion of David is certainly directed against the man, who by sophistry wishes to disengage himself from the superior duties the Deity has imposed on man, on account of his higher capacities; and the best and most sensible proof of the immeasurable distance between the highest grade of the brute-creation and man lies in the

power of speech, of which he is the sole possessor. Speech, considered as the means for physical gratifications, might have been dispensed with; individuals, who never spoke, nor could speak, have gone through every process of animal life, with as much satisfaction to themselves as the most eloquent. But the high and dignified purpose to communicate our thoughts, to impress our fellow-men with the notions necessary for their spiritual welfare, could never have been attained in perfection, without the faculty of uttering articulated sounds. This consideration forces itself on the conviction of every man, who hears the stammering attempts at speech of an infant; and thus the poet says, that the lisping of babes confutes the enemies of God. Who are the scorers? The scorner, who divests himself of the glorious privilege of standing at the head of creation, forfeits his own happiness and endangers that of his brethren; and it is in this sense that Scripture calls a man an enemy to God. Such appears to have been explicitly the construction David put on the word "enemy;" whom he represents as breathing vengeance. מִתְנַקֵּם. This verb is in the conjugation, הִתְפַּעֵל, and the only instance of its being thus used in Scripture; and were it to allude to the wicked man, who bears rancour against his fellow, the conjugation, קָל, or פָּעַל, would have been sufficiently expressive. But the truth is, that the vengeance here alluded to is wreaked by the sinner on himself, which explains the verb being a reciprocal one.

WHEN I gaze on the work of thy finger, the sky,
 The moon, the stars, which thou hast founded,
 What is man, that thou thinkest of him?
 The son of man, that thou tendest him?
 Thou hast placed him but little below the angels,
 Thou hast crowned him with honour and glory.
 Thou madest him a ruler over thy works,
 And all nature was laid at his feet;
 The lamb, the ox, and the beasts of the field;
 The fowls of the air, and fish of the sea.

THE different branches of the household of man are gradually enumerated. In successive order the dominion of the children of Adam over all the breathing inhabitants of the globe is made the subject of our astonishment. What different mode of treatment does it not require to bring the innocent and defenceless sheep and the raging hyæna under the management and to be in awe of the same master? From the meek lamb the poet rises to the beasts of prey, assigning the middle station to the grazing and

powerful ox. Not confined to his immediate neighbours, nor to the inhabitants of his own element, the lord of terrestrial creation claims and masters the birds of the air and the inhabitants of the flood; creatures that can safely venture into elements to which man is a stranger are still brought into obedience to the superior mental capacities with which man is gifted, and which he ought to employ for the glory of Him whose boon they are.

“HE forces roads through the high seas!”

CHORUS.

“Eternal God, our Lord!

How glorious is thy name on earth!”

THE highest triumph of human genius is the science of navigation. If we abstract even the immense good the world derives from this science; were we only to consider it as a speculative one, we should be forced to acknowledge that it is an achievement replete with wonder. On a frail bark the adventurous mariner leaves the stable abode of his fathers, and directs his looks to the stars by which he guides his trust through the void of the ocean; no marks give him any assurance of his being on his right road, save those he finds in his science. He never approaches the land until he is near the place of his destination. The multiplicity of instruments necessary for a maritime enterprize render the whole of navigation a composition of scientific wonders. This the psalmist felt, after having passed in review all

the animals of the globe, and pronounced them the servants of man, when he exclaimed, that this favourite of heaven could find his road on the watery desert by dint of his understanding. Then, if such is the success we achieve by means of our superior reason, we are, on the other hand, obliged to render a strict account of the use we have made of this invaluable trust. This account the Lord, Creator and Preserver of the heavenly host, will demand at our hands in the fields of immortality. The enthusiasm of our Sacred Poet arrived at its apogee at the conclusion of the psalm, where the hearers, seized with the energy of his strains, are invited to join unanimously in the chorus to praise the Lord, who is enthroned on high, and extends his fostering hand over his children below.

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VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 340.)

BEN ZOMA said, "Who is truly wise? He who is willing to receive instruction from all men: As it is written, 'From all my teachers I gather understanding.' Who is truly a hero? He who subdues his own passions: As it is said, 'He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he who governeth his own temper, than he who taketh a city.' Who is truly rich? He who is contented with his lot: As it is said, 'When thou shalt eat of the labour of thy hands, then happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.' Happy shalt thou be in this world, and it shall be well with thee in the world to come. Who is truly honourable? He who honoureth the human species: As it is written, 'For them who honour me will I honour, and they who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.'"

COMMENTARY. *Who is truly a hero?* &c.—Our teacher having told us who is the truly wise man so often mentioned in Scripture, and always in terms of praise; and having pointed out to us that it is not he who triumphs in superior natural or acquired abilities; and whose overwhelming intellectual powers enable him to maintain any opinion he may ever advance, however paradoxical, against the better judgment of others: But, on the contrary, that Holy Writ means him who, bridling the aspirations of his vanity, is ready to become instructed by every man and by every object in nature, in that most useful, because most permanent and important, study, the knowledge of God, of virtue, and of piety. Having afforded us this salutary information, our teacher's next care is to instruct us who is truly mighty; who it is whose true valour entitles him to the appellation of "Hero." And here we must observe, that it is the intention of the sage *tanai* to convince us, that the qualities and gifts of fortune,

which are most highly prized by men, are all in their true, and therefore highest, perfection, concentrated in the pious man, who loves his God, who fears him, and obeys his commandments. The qualities mankind value most are wisdom and valour; the gifts of fortune, which rank highest in their estimation, are wealth and honours. Our teacher does not oppose himself to the generally received opinions of mankind; he does not tell them that they are wrong in affixing a high value to wisdom, to valour, to riches, and honours; but his object is to guard them against the errors into which they are likely to fall through misapprehension, or by mistaking the shadow for the substance. He therefore tells us what is true wisdom, true valour, real wealth, and real honour. And he shows us that what is given to so very few worldly-minded men, who make their present state of existence, its petty occupations, and transient enjoyments, the sole object of their care; that what is given to so very few of them—

namely, to concentrate within themselves all that mankind most highly estimates—is the portion of every truly religious, virtuous, and pious man.

In pursuance of this purpose, having told us what is true wisdom, and whom the highest authority declares possessed of that most valuable quality of the mind, our teacher next proceeds to place before us the second great attribute or quality which commands the universal admiration of mankind—valour. And here, again, he has recourse to the highest authority, that of Holy Writ, to enlighten our understanding, and to guard us against the mistake of supposing that true valour is fearlessness, or contempt of danger. The valour to which the Sacred Scriptures afford their commendation is not that innate quality of body and mind which enables a man to overcome his enemies; and, smiling at the perils which surround him, to rush on his foe, and at the imminent risk of life to achieve the subjugation of whosoever does oppose him. No! it is not the reckless and callous conqueror, who, in his mad career of ambition, drags entire nations after his chariot wheels; which, rolling over the dying and the dead, crush whatever impedes his headlong course, regardless alike of the groans and imprecations, of the tears and of the blood, of his ill-fated victims. No! it is not the savage warrior, who submits to every privation, and braves every peril, to seek out a foe whose destruction he considers as ample compensation for all that he has himself suffered or been exposed to. No! neither of these can expect the approbation of a merciful Providence, or the commendations of that Book in which the Preserver of the universe, the all-bounteous Father of his creatures, has deigned to make known his will. Very different indeed is that species of valour on which the Sacred Volume bestows its praise. Not the destroyer is a hero, but the preserver. He is truly valiant who subdues his evil passions. When he has it in his power to harm another man, to crush his foes, to rise upon the ruin of his enemies; and when the temptation assails him

from within, so that ambition, or avarice, or vengeance, or anger is clamorous for that gratification which the opportunity offers; if he then nobly resists the promptings of his own evil inclination; if, in the moment when the voice of desire is loudest within him, when the tempter is most busy, and all the sterner energies of human nature, panting for action, urge him on with a force that threatens to become irresistible; if, at that moment, he can at once and effectually curb the inward tumult; if, by one effort of determined will, he can restore calmness to his agitated mind, and silence the clamour of his passions by the reflection, "It is contrary to the will of God:" If he can do this, then he is a hero; then, and then only, does the Sacred Volume bestow its praise on him, or deigns to call him valiant. For it is far more difficult to overcome the foe within us than to conquer armies; mightier is the effort required to curb our own passions than to subjugate nations. And that courage which enables us to sacrifice our own vain-glory, and the opinion of the world, to the glory of God, greatly exceeds the reckless daring which urges us on to any perilous undertaking. Such are the men whose valour is recorded in Holy Writ; therefore is Boaz called "a mighty man." (Ruth ii. 1.) Therefore is Gideon saluted by the angel, "The Lord is with thee, mighty man of valour." (Judges vi. 12.) This quality, so exercised, assimilates man at an humble distance to his Maker. The Lord of the universe is called, "the great, the mighty, and tremendous God;" but his might is not evinced in crushing those who act against his will, or in destroying those who offend against his laws. No; his might is evinced in the inexhaustible goodness which he bestows on all his creatures; in the infinite mercy and beneficence which presides over the laws of all creation; and in the unceasing order which maintains these laws throughout the whole universe. His might is shown in preserving, not in destroying; and even so should it be with man. And therefore our teacher supports his

maxim by quoting the words of the inspired Sage: "He who is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he who governeth his own temper, than he who taketh a city." (Prov. xvi. 32.) For while the mighty warrior who taketh a city can only do so at the expense of human life, and by destroying the works which human skill and industry have laboured to erect, he who is slow to anger, and governs his own passions, is not only as great a benefactor to the human race as the warrior is a scourge, but must exercise a greater degree of those very qualities of the mind, unconquerable determination and dauntless fortitude, by the abuse of which the ambitious conqueror perseveres in his blood-stained course.

Who is truly rich? &c.—The gifts of fortune are by some preferred to the qualities of the mind. Provided a man be rich, many consider him as above the common lot of humanity; and even he himself looks down with contempt on the wise and good, whom, as he thinks, all-powerful gold places at his bidding. What, though he has neither head to plan, nor heart to execute; though in his feeble mind, folly and cowardice dispute the palm, has he not gold? Can he not buy the ideas of the wise, and the valour of the mighty? Is not gold the representative of the productions of nature, and of the successful efforts of human skill and industry? Is not the earth and its fulness at the disposal of him who has gold? Is he not truly the lord and master of whatever may tempt his desires or excite his appetites? While the pious man sometimes wants bread, and the talented man pines for that encouragement which the rich man alone can bestow, is not wealth superior to virtue and talent? Thrice happy, therefore, is he who is rich! He takes precedence over every other man; for his gold supplies wisdom, valour, and those other estimable qualities which, though he does not possess, he can buy.

Such is the reflection which a superficial view of the ordinary events of this earth forces on the mind of him whose thoughts have not been ma-

tured under the influence of God's holy law. Such is the common error of little minds, whose ideas, circumscribed within the narrow bounds of the present, cannot penetrate the future; and who, blinded by the glare of outward pomp and splendour, cannot, with keen glance, pierce through the glittering cloud that obscures their vision. But such is not the case with our teacher: The apparent happiness of the minute does not mislead him. And though he is willing to allow that wealth, if properly used, is an advantage, inasmuch as it gives man the means of ameliorating the condition of his brethren, and of proving that he is not unworthy of the blessings which Providence has bestowed on him: Still, even in this the most estimable view, wealth and the gifts of fortune generally are inferior to those far more precious qualities of the mind, which are innate in man, and acquire their full force from a proper knowledge of the laws of God and the determination to obey those laws. Therefore the sage *tanai* does not assign the first rank in the scale of those advantages which men value most, to riches, but to wisdom; to that wisdom with the true nature of which he has made us acquainted. Nor is even the second rank open to wealth; according to his estimation, it is true valour, that valour which fears to offend the Lord, to which the second rank is due. It is only after having treated of these qualities, which are lasting, and which, when once they have taken a firm hold of the mind, can never again be dislodged, that our teacher deigns to take the transient gifts of fortune into consideration, and directs his view to riches.

As he has done with respect to wisdom and valour, the sage *tanai* takes care to guard us against the erroneous notions entertained by the generality of mankind, and, supporting his maxim by the highest authority, to instruct us in the nature of true riches. Accordingly, he tells us, that he is not rich whose house is filled with silver, gold, and precious stones; who, adding daily to his wealth, is still intent on a

further increase of his store. No! it is not this insatiable spirit of accumulation,—which, disregarding what it has, pines for that which it has not yet,—that Sacred Scripture dignifies with the name of “wealth,” and honours with its commendation: But it is that spirit of contentment, which, satisfied with its portion, be that portion large or small, rejoices in the bounty of Providence: This contented disposition it is which constitutes true riches, and is acceptable in the eyes of God and of man. For he who is not possessed of that contented disposition, but whose insatiable avarice, or grasping ambition, urges him on in the unceasing pursuit of a phantom, which, every minute attained, does every second escape from him again,—he is, by Holy Writ, called a rool and a sinner.

The spirit of contentment is a gift of God, imparted to him who has found grace in His sight, and accompanies true wisdom. For as the delight of the truly wise man is to obey the will of his Creator, to progress on the road to perfection, and to prepare for that eternal bliss which is the purpose of our creation, the end and aim of our being, his soul is above being tempted or bribed by the transient enjoyments of earth: He desires no possession beyond what is absolutely needful to protect himself and his family from direct want; therefore he rejoices, be his portion ever so scanty: He reflects that were it even less, nay, were he utterly destitute, it behoves him cheerfully to submit to the dispensations of Providence; and is sincerely thankful for a lot which permits him to persevere in extending his knowledge and fear of the Lord. He who is gifted with this disposition and way of thinking is truly rich; but he who is not satisfied is poor; though his treasury overflow with millions and his possessions extend to the furthest India, he is poor in his own estimation, he is wretched in his own mind. For what are his havings in comparison with his desires? He can not be benevolent to his fellow creatures; for as all his ideas are confined to one object only,—the increase of his

stores,—his intercourse is with such men only as can prove instrumental to pander to the ruling passion of his soul. The truly wise man cannot claim his attention: The virtuous but poor man is a burthen on his time, even though he should not claim his assistance; for how can he, immersed in gainful pursuits, afford to lose a moment's time on men, who contemn and despise that which he considers as his chief good? It is impossible for him to open his heart and hand, effectually to relieve a fellow creature; for each day he computes his wealth; and were he to dispossess himself of any part of his darling riches, his heart would grieve and his mind be inconsolable, at the diminution of his hoards. And though sometimes he may throw a hurried gift to an importunate beggar, it is less with the benevolent wish to relieve the wants of the distressed, than from the selfish consideration of relieving himself from importunities which break in upon and disturb his profitable meditations. His days and nights are passed in fear lest he should lose his riches; and in care, how to increase and preserve them: And when he hears of another more wealthy than himself, envy gnaws his heart and consumes his flesh. Impossible it is for him joyfully to serve the Lord, for he knows no other joy than to heap gold on gold, possession on possession; and when this, his only enjoyment, is become familiar to him, its sense is lost, and he goes on acquiring, not because acquisition affords him any pleasure, but because non-acquisition is a positive pain to his restless mind. His heart cannot be perfect with God, who withholds from him the gratification of his desires, and whose blessing, however abundant, is not commensurate with his insatiable longings; for he knows not, and feels not, that though each day brought its accumulation of wealth, yet each day would also be productive of accumulated care and trouble, the source of which is in his own wretched mind and discontented temper. Accordingly our sages, of blessed memory, said of such men, “No man מת ‘dieth’ in the enjoy-

ment even of half of what he desires." Their intention is evidently not to comprise all mankind in this maxim, as they themselves declare him to be truly rich who is contented with his lot, and whose utmost desires do not extend beyond the portion which Providence grants him: But, according to our opinion, the word *מת* is here used in the same sense as the word *מתים*, is used by the inspired Psalmist, when he says *יה לא המתים יהללו יה* "The dead praise not the Lord." (Psalm cxv. 17.) By which expression he does not mean those who rest in the grave; but those whose heart and soul are so entirely attached to and absorbed by the things of this world, that they are, as it were, dead to the thought and feeling of a future state; and, therefore, they are, metaphoric-ally, called dead. And as such men have no feeling for true wisdom, and the nobler pursuits of the soul, they do not and cannot praise God with

that fulness of heart and sincerity which his service demands. When, therefore, our Rabbies say *אין אדם מת, וחצי תאוותו בידו* their meaning is, that no *dead* man (or such an one whose heart and soul are so entirely attached to, and absorbed by, the enjoyments of this earth that he is, as it were, dead to the thoughts and feelings of a future state) ever yet attained even a half of the inordinate desires which torment his insatiable fancy; for that as fast as one of his wishes is realized, or one of his longings appeased, the very enjoyment of that wish becomes a source of future pain, inas-much as it gives rise to further cravings, which, while unpossessed, corrode and leaven all his other enjoyments; and which, if even they are attained, do but serve to engender fresh desires, in endless succession, to every man whose disposition is a stranger to heaven's choicest gift—content.

(*To be continued.*)

H. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(*Continued from page 348.*)

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOWEVER much a man may strive, and however careful he may be to employ every possible means that can ensure the success of his undertakings, it does not of necessity follow that his efforts must be successful: For instance, we see that a skilful physician employs every means that science is acquainted with, and experience has approved, in order to subdue some violent disease that assails the human frame; the treatment he prescribes is the very best that can be observed by his patient, and is actually observed by him in all its most minute parts. But although both physician and patient do their duty to its fullest extent, the one in prescribing the remedies and treatment best adapted to combat and overcome the malady, and the other in strictly adhering to the treatment prescribed, and in obeying the di-

rections given to him by the physician in their minutest particulars, it may nevertheless so happen that their efforts are not crowned with the expected success, and they fail in restoring health, and even in checking the progress of the disorder. The agriculturist likewise may employ every possible care in the tilling of his field: He may sow his seed in proper season, and the ground in which he sows may be fertile, but still it may so happen that his seed does not thrive. The reason of this miscarriage is in both cases equally obvious. The skill of the physician is not of itself sufficient to effect a cure, nor is the labour of the husbandman of itself sufficient to ensure a plentiful harvest; but both require alike the co-operation of nature; without which their exertions are altogether unavailing.

Such is likewise the case with prayers. Very often a man offers

his orisons, in the manner in which they ought to be offered to the Deity, in due season, and on a proper subject; but, nevertheless, his supplications are not granted, because what he prays for is not in accordance with the will of God. For though the skilful navigator pilots his ship with the greatest prudence and care, and ploughs the ocean during the most propitious season, he may fail in reaching the destined port, because it is contrary to the designs of Providence that he should reach that port. This interposition of Providence may either be a punishment for past misconduct, as was the case with Jonah, or a dispensation to secure a man's future welfare, as we have demonstrated in our thirteenth chapter of this division.* So likewise prayers, although properly offered and in due season, may not be favourably received, either in consequence of former misconduct, which requires punishment, as was the case with Moses; or that he who prays has placed himself at such a distance from the Deity, that it is only by repeated and urgent prayer that he can at all hope to be heard; or his misdeeds have placed such a barrier between him and the Deity as the most urgent prayers cannot surmount, unless accompanied by positive proofs of contrition and amendment, as we have fully explained in the preceding chapter.||

But sometimes the granting of his prayers is in mercy withheld from man, inasmuch as what he prays for would, if granted, be productive of evil to him. Thus a man may pray for children, and his prayer is not granted, because the Divine prescience foresees that had he children, they would not only be undutiful, but even strive and conspire to deprive him of his life, as was the case with David and his son Absalom. Or a man may pray for wealth, and it is not granted to him, because it is foreseen that wealth would be productive of eventual evil to him, or even lead him to deny his

God: As Solomon saith, "There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun; namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." (Eccles. v. 13.) And again, "Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?" (Prov. xxx. 9.) Or of whatever kind or nature his prayer may be, its fulfilment may in mercy be withheld from him, for reasons which, though not obvious or apparent to human reason, are distinct to, and clearly foreseen by, the Deity. Therefore the choicest prayer is that offered by the sage, when he said, "Lord of the universe, let thy will be done on high in the heavens: Grant content and a tranquil mind to those who fear thee below on earth, and do that which seemeth good to thee." He first prays that the Lord may guide the influences of nature and the laws of creation according to His own will; and as thus whatever doth happen will be from Him, those who fear Him on earth will be contented cheerfully and with a tranquil mind to submit to whatsoever his Providence ordains. And he concludes his prayer with the words, "Do that which seemeth good to thee," because Thou alone art the true Judge of what really is good; therefore whatever may be my prayer to thee, or whatever is the purport of my supplications, do thou what seemeth good to thee, not what I implore; for, not knowing what is really for my good, I very often pray for that which, if granted, would eventually be productive of evil to myself or to others: Do thou therefore decide, and do that which thou deemest good, and not what I beseech thee to do.

It is in this sense that our Rabbies, of blessed memory, say, "Man is equally bound to thank God for the ill which befalls him as he is bound to thank for the good." (Talmud, treatise *Berachoth*, folio 20.) Man is not in a condition to decide what is truly good or truly evil: Sometimes an apparent good leads to a real evil; and sometimes the most poignant afflictions are productive of real good: Therefore it behoves man cheerfully and with

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., page 180, *et seq.*

|| Ibid., Vol. II., page 347.

perfect resignation to submit to the decrees of Providence, to leave the choice of what is most conducive towards his true happiness altogether to the Deity; and in every vicissitude of life to express his gratitude at the cognizance and superintendence, which Providence is pleased to extend to him: Accordingly, David says, "Salvation belongeth to the Lord." (Psalm iii. 8.) The Lord is the sole and competent judge of the best means to effect our salvation; the choice of these means belongeth altogether to him. All that it behoves man to do, is cheerfully to resign himself to the Divine guidance, and to bless the Lord for whatever befalls him, be it good or evil. Then will man discover that every thing is, in reality, intended for, and conducive to, his true good; therefore the Psalmist concludes the verse we have quoted with the words, "Thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah." "Whatever meansthou mayest choose to afford us thy aid and salvation, thy blessing is alike on thy people: And even if these should at first afflict us, we may be assured that they are adapted to promote our real good, and to pour forth on us thy abundant blessings." From all that we have now stated, it becomes evident that man, in his prayers to the Lord, must abstain from presuming to dictate to the Deity the precise manner in which he wishes that the Divine aid should be extended to him. Let him, in general terms, implore the heavenly blessing on his undertakings; or that the Divine mercy may grant health and happiness to him and his household: But let him not prescribe the manner in which that blessing is to evince its operation and effects, or to what extent that mercy is to be afforded to him. For he who presumes to be thus precise in his prayers, does, as it were, strive to constrain the Divine will to act in accordance with his own views and desires, but does not appear willing to resign and subject himself, together with his views and desires, to the Divine will. He who does so, becomes guilty of arrogance, inas-

much as he appears to call in question the wisdom and power of God, and constitutes himself the judge of what is best adapted for his good, and of the means which are to effect that object. It is in allusion and opposition to this extreme arrogance that the Sacred Singer exclaims, "Truly my soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation." (Psalm lxii. 1.) His meaning is: "When we implore the assistance of mortal man, we must be precise in the nature of our request, and enter minutely into the manner in which we desire that the requested aid may be extended unto us; for unless we are thus precise and particular, he cannot know what it is we really do want, what is best and most useful for us, and which are the means best adapted to promote our wishes. But when we address our supplications to the Most High, it behoves us to resign ourselves altogether to his superior guidance; therefore our souls must wait upon him, and not presume to prescribe the manner and means His divine aid is to adopt; for He knows better than we do what is best and most useful for us. Therefore "our salvation" (or, as in another verse of the same psalm the Sacred Singer expresses himself, "our hope") "cometh from Him." He knows best how His salvation is to be extended to us, and how our best hopes and expectations are to be realized. And therefore the inspired Poet-King, on another occasion, after saying, "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart," adds, "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." (Psalm xxxvii. 4, 5.) While thou delightest in the Lord, and prayest to him to grant the desires of thy heart, do not presume to dictate to Him, but trust altogether to his goodness, his wisdom, and his power, and "He will bring it to pass." That which is most conducive to thy real good, and of which He alone is the sole competent judge, will be accomplished by Him in such manner, and by such means, as He may deem most proper.

This is what we have thought it

necessary to state on the subject of to direct our attention to the subject prayers; and we shall next proceed of repentance.

(To be continued.)

III. THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT AMONG THE ISRAELITES PREVIOUS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MONARCHY.

(Continued from page 320.)

THE second protecting regulation was the prohibition to hold any intercourse, or to enter into bonds of affinity and alliance, with any of the seven nations whose land was to become the inheritance of Israel, and who, by command of the Sovereign Legislator, were to be totally expelled, so that not one individual of them was to be permitted to exist among the Israelites. This measure, which certainly appears harsh, and contrary to the common feelings of humanity, was, nevertheless, most necessary, and, indeed, indispensable, for the preservation of the newly-erected state. There can be no doubt but that these seven nations were far more corrupt, far more deeply immersed in the blood-stained rites of superstition, and the debasing intoxications of sensuality, than any of their neighbours. Holy Writ takes care to place before us a recital of their horrid practices, when, after enumerating a series of offences revolting to human nature, the Sacred Legislator concludes with observing, "Ye shall not walk in the manners of the nations which I cast out before you, for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them." (Levit. xx. 23.) This abhorrence is so decided, that no compromise whatever is to be entered into with them: Flight or death is the fearful alternative which the law offers to these nations.

But lest the Israelite should be inclined, in the ardour of conquest, and the exultation of victory, to extend this anathema to other nations, or to enlarge his boundaries at the expense of other and weaker states; lest he should become cruel, blood-thirsty, and inflated with pride, so that he might consider other nations as below his notice, and be indifferent to their sufferings, the sacred code takes care to inculcate feelings

of kindness and brotherly love towards the whole human race, by calling all men "neighbours and brethren," by commanding the Israelite to "love his neighbour like himself," and also "to love the stranger like himself;" and, in order to check any overweening pride which the Israelite might be tempted to harbour, he is told, "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee; and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware to thy fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (Deut. ix. 5.)

In addition to the general rules of humanity, and the exhortation against pride, which we have just quoted, the fundamental laws of the Israelites take care to define which are the nations they are forbidden at all to associate with, or to receive into their friendship or alliance: Such are, 1. The seven nations which inhabit the land of Canaan, and also the Philistines: These are not to be permitted to reside in the land of the Lord, neither as tributaries nor as allies; for they are faithless, all their ways are deceitful, and the influence of their corrupt example cannot but prove baneful to Israel. They are, therefore, to be altogether expelled from the land: If they resist, they are to be put to the sword; but those who are willing to quit the country may remove, and seek their abode wherever they list. In this anathema, however, the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon are not comprised; but as they reside peaceably in their own territories to the north of Israel, no attempt is to be made to disturb them in their possessions.

2. The Lord commanded the memory of Amalek to be utterly

blotted out, for their merciless and treacherous conduct to the Israelites; whom they, without any cause or provocation whatsoever, attacked in the wilderness, after their exit from Egypt. Nor did they boldly and manfully present themselves in front of the Israelites, fairly to do battle; but assailed their rear-guard, and slew the unfortunate stragglers, who, weary, exhausted, and defenceless, had not been able to keep up with the main body, and could offer no resistance. Moreover, the Amalekites, who dwelt to the south of Israel, were a predatory horde, who not only plundered and murdered the caravans which traversed the desert, but also made frequent and ruinous irruptions into the adjacent countries, and particularly into the southern provinces of Israel, where they plundered, destroyed, murdered, or carried into captivity, whatever and whoever fell in their power. And as they lived upon the spoil which they acquired, and the habits of ferocity and bloodshed were so deeply sunk in their minds, that it was altogether impossible to reclaim or civilize them; the welfare and tranquillity of Israel, and, indeed, of all the neighbouring nations, made it a matter of absolute and imperative necessity that so lawless and turbulent a horde should be so completely expelled, that their memory might be forgotten in the regions which, at one time, they infested.

3. On account of the inhospitable conduct which the Moabites and Ammonites observed against the Israelites on their exit from Egypt, and principally on account of their having suborned Balaam, the son of Beor, to curse Israel, and, by his advice, seduced them into idolatry and fornication; these two nations were for ever excluded from the congregation of the Lord; nor were the Israelites to enter into alliances or leagues of amity with them: Nevertheless, the Israelites were strictly enjoined "not to distress them, nor contend with them in battle;" a command which was rigorously obeyed on the part of the Israelites; who only took up arms against either of them in their own defence, and after they had been attacked by the

Moabites and Ammonites respectively. The war carried on against the Midianites was in a just quarrel, as that nation had conspired with the Moabites to work the downfall of Israel; and had even out-stripped the zeal of their allies in prostituting their daughters, and even those of the highest rank, (for Cozbi, who was slain by Phinehas the priest, was the "daughter of Zur, who was head over a people, and of a chief house in Midian," Numb. xxv. 15,) to the embraces of the Israelites, in order that these might be enticed into the idolatrous worship of Baal-peor: An act of high treason and rebellion against the Lord, the King of Israel.

The wars carried on by Israel against Sihon, king of the Amorites, and against Og, king of Bashan, were purely defensive. Tradition relates, that the kings of Canaan paid heavy subsidies to Sihon and Og, in order that they might defend the passage of the Jordan against all invaders; so that when Israel applied to Sihon for permission to pass through his territories, he, by virtue of his alliance with the kings of Canaan, and of their subsidies, felt himself bound, not only to refuse the permission demanded, but also to act hostilely against Israel: Therefore he "gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel, into the wilderness; and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel." It consequently is evident, that he was the assailant, and attacked Israel ere they had attempted to cross his border. Such was likewise the case with Og, king of Bashan, who, alarmed at the fate of Sihon, and called upon, perhaps, by his Trans-Jordanic allies, went out against the Israelites, and was defeated at Edrei.

With all other nations the Israelites were bid to live in peace, and had permission to enter into leagues of amity and concord. Accordingly, we find David in close alliance with the kings of Tyrus and of Hamath. Solomon not only confirmed and continued these alliances, but entered into a league with the king of Egypt: And when, after his death, the separation took place which divided the nation into two hostile septs, and

involved the Israelites in three centuries of fratricidal warfare, the kings of Judah, as well as those of Israel, eagerly availed themselves of the alliance of Syrians, Assyrians, Egyptians, &c. It is true that these alliances were severely reprobated by the prophets; but it was not on account of their being contrary to the fundamental laws of Israel and the covenant with their heavenly King; but because such alliances evinced a want of faith, and of reliance on the help of God, in those who formed them, and their perfect indifference for the sufferings they thereby entailed on their brethren. And the result proved the great right the prophets had to exclaim against these alliances, which, not only in the time of the first temple, but also in the time of the second temple, when the Asmonæan princes courted the alliance of Rome, led to the conquest of the land and to the exile and dispersion of its inhabitants.

While such was the policy with respect to foreign nations, dictated by the fundamental law, the internal administration of affairs remained nearly in the same state as before the Deity had been proclaimed and accepted as the Monarch of Israel. The division into twelve tribes continued in force; and though the Levites had been set apart for the service of the Lord, and did not either have a portion in the land, or a part in the political discussions or government of the Israelites, yet the promise of Jacob to his favourite son Joseph,—“And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine;” (Gen. xlviii. 5);—was observed by his descendants, and the two sons of Joseph ranked as distinct tribes. The internal affairs of each separate tribe were still administered by the *Nassi*, or “prince,” assisted by his council of the *Roshi Alpha Israel*, “chiefs of the thousands of Israel,” in the same manner as had been the case previous to the Divine manifestation on Sinai. At the advice of his father-in-law Jethro, Moses introduced two new offices among the

Israelites, the *Shotrim*, “beadles,” and the *Shophtim*, “judges.”

The duty of the first was to take care of the genealogical tables of the tribes and families to which they respectively belonged: It was their business to see that every member of the family was properly inscribed on these registers; and that none others than actual members of the family were so inscribed. They were likewise to carry into force the sentence of the *Shophet*, or “judge,” who was to administer justice to the people, to settle their differences, and to punish offences according to law. And as the priests and Levites, by virtue of their office, were necessarily more conversant with the fundamental law than any of the other judges could be; they sat as assessors at the different tribunals which dispensed justice to the nation. All offices were honorary; no salary was derived from any, except that the priests and Levites, as officers of the king’s household, and having no other portion or inheritance in Israel, were provided for out of the tithes, contributions, and free-will offerings, raised for the purpose of upholding the dignity of the royal service. Each tribe was perfectly independent of, and uncontrolled by, the other tribes. Its internal affairs were, as we have already stated, administered by its *Nassi*, assisted by the *Roshibeth-aboth*, without the intervention of any external authority: And it was only in matters relating to the general welfare that the chiefs and elders of the various tribes, or all the male population of Israel, assembled. But though each tribe was thus independent and confined within its own immediate sphere of action, without exercising any control over the other tribes, or being controlled by them; yet there were four causes which combined to constitute these twelve independent tribes one people, inseparably united together, for weal or for woe. These four causes were, 1. Their common origin. 2. Their aim and purpose. 3. Their king. 4. The residence of his choice.

1. Their common origin; inasmuch as they are all sprung from the same stock; were all the descendants of

one common progenitor Abraham; and tracing their descent from him, through Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve sons of the last named patriarch, they were all of kindred blood, forming one great family, the members of which, however numerous, were all kinsmen, and nearly related to each other.

2. Their aim and purpose was uniform. All the tribes were alike to possess the land which had been promised to their common ancestor. They were alike to observe the laws and obey the commandments of the Lord their God in purity and uprightness. And all of them, without any exception, were destined and intended to instruct the nations of earth, and to proclaim to them that the Lord alone is God; that there is none other beside him who has created the universe, of which he is the sole preserver.

3. Their king; as they had all unanimously, with one heart and one voice, consented to receive the Lord as their immediate Sovereign, had vowed fealty to him, and with general acclamation proclaimed his royalty, and their obedience to his laws.

4. The residence of his choice; which was also the place of worship to the whole nation, where they all offered their prayers, and presented their sacrifices; to uphold the splendour of which they all contri-

buted, and in the preservation of which they were all equally interested.

These fourfold causes, combined, formed a bond of union so strong, that no possible external influence could ever possess force sufficient to tear it asunder, as long as the Israelites remained firm in their allegiance to their heavenly Father, and faithful to the principles inculcated by their fundamental law. They made it the imperative duty of every tribe to be mindful of, and attentive to, the general good; to watch the conduct of the other tribes; and whenever any tribe or family was found to deviate from the law of the Lord, to exhort them to amend their conduct, and to be obedient to the law. In such cases it became the duty of the whole nation to caution and correct the offenders by telling them, "Ye have done wrong: Ye endanger the welfare of the state, by offending our Sovereign and defying his will: We therefore exhort you, If ye will desist from your evil practices and return to your allegiance, it is well. But if you persist in your stiffneckedness and rebellion, we, as faithful subjects, will draw the sword against you, and compel your obedience." That such was the case, is fully proved by the history of the concubine at Gibeah. (Judges xx. 12.)

(To be continued.)

IV. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 336.)

MAIMONIDES directed his flight to Africa, and it is supposed that he sought refuge in Morocco, but that, on witnessing the persecution of Averroes, and fearful of being implicated in his fate, he withdrew to Egypt, and settled in the city of Phaustata, where he for some years lived in obscurity, and maintained himself by trading in coins and precious stones. But it was impossible that the master mind of Maimonides and his transcendent talents could long remain concealed or unknown. Egypt was at that time the seat of intestine and foreign warfare. The

Fatimite caliphs, descendants of Ali, the son-in-law of Mahomet, had gradually sunk into such a state of weakness, that they were no longer able to preserve their dominions from anarchy or from the hostile inroads of the Christian kings of Jerusalem, or the Turkish sultans of Aleppo. Detested as heretics by the Abbaside caliphs of Bagdad; exposed to continual rebellion from their own oppressed subjects, the caliphs of Cairo, in the midst of their gorgeous palaces, were but the slaves of their overgrown Turkish viziers, to whom they were forced to

yield the actual power, while they themselves were mere ciphers, divested of all influence and authority, and eventually became the victims of their foreign and domestic foes. The Egyptian caliphate was destroyed, and the country subdued, by the armies of Nouredin, sultan of Damascus.

One of the leaders of that army, Al-Fadhl Abd-Errahim ben Al-Baisane, became acquainted with Maimonides. Himself a man of sense and learning, he knew how to appreciate the talents and abilities of the great Rabbi, who ostensibly as physician, but in reality as confidential friend and adviser, shared the fortunes of his Turkish patron, from whose service he subsequently passed into that of Salaheddin Joseph ben Agub, who, from having been vizier to Nouredin, sultan of Damascus, and chief of his armies in Egypt, raised himself to the throne of that country, and eventually becoming ruler of Damascus and Aleppo, expelled the crusaders from Jerusalem, which he reconquered after the great battle of Tiberias. To this monarch, who is known to Europeans by the name of Saladdin, and who figures in English history, as the antagonist of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, Maimonides became physician-in-chief, and privy counsellor; and there can be no doubt, but the profound judgment and rare talents of the Rabbi exercised great influence on the mind and actions of Saladdin. But unfortunately, so little is known respecting the life of Maimonides during the long period of thirty-five years, from the time he entered the service of Saladdin until his own death, and the sources which can be consulted are so scanty, incomplete, and evidently apocryphal, that we feel much greater satisfaction in turning to his works, than in repeating the incredible tales which the author of *שלשלת הקבלה*, "the chain of tradition," tries to pass off on his readers as the life and adventures of R. Moses bar Maimon. This historian does not hesitate to tax our credulity to the utmost, by causing Rashi, (R. Salomon Jarchi,) who died in the year 1105, to pay a visit in Egypt to T'ambam, (Maimonides,) who was

not born till the year 1131, and did not settle in Egypt till after 1160, above half a century after Rashi's death. The same historian, who brings Rashi in contact with Godfrey of Bouillon, to whom he remains invisible, until he obtains those assurances of safety which he deems it needful to require for himself and friends before he dares appear, the same historian turns Maimonides into an operator of the most wonderful cures, who, by means of charms and talismans, can even restore the dead to life, and does not hesitate to swallow a dose of the most powerful and subtle poison, which the united skill and rage of all the Mussulman physicians of the sultan prepares for him. It is a pity that all these tales of wonder are not come down to us in a better authenticated shape, particularly as an acute and impartial critic gives it as his opinion of this historian, "that R. Jechiel, the author of the *שלשלת הקבלה*, 'chain of tradition,' ought to have been fettered by his own chain."

But while we want sufficient materials from which to fill up the vacuum in the biography of Maimonides, from the time he entered the service of Saladdin, until his own death, we have before us his works; the rich fruits of his meditations, the imperishable offspring of his great mind, the meritorious records of his zeal and assiduity to instruct and to improve his brethren and mankind in general. It appears that as soon as our Rabbi found himself free from the fear of want, and in a situation which permitted him to indulge his love of study and his desire to become useful to the world, he immediately resumed those occupations which his precipitate flight from Cordova, and subsequent penury in Egypt, had interrupted. The labour of eight years,* produced the *יד החזקה* *manus fortis*, "the strong hand," also called *משנה תורה*, "the repetition of the law," written in Hebrew, and held in the highest estimation by the Jews. This work in fourteen books

* Compare *Keddush hachodesh*, c. ix, where he dates from the year 1171, with *Shmatta Fejotef*, c. x, which, as also the preface to the work, is dated from the year 1178.

is a complete code of the Jews, according to the Talmudic system of legislation. The most persevering assiduity, combined with profound judgment, a thorough and intimate acquaintance with a subject, of which the author had a full view, at once rapid, correct, and comprehensive ;—all these qualities combined to form this celebrated work. Maimonides had maturely digested his plan, from which he in no instance departs ; and, as he himself declares, his intention was to put an end to that superficial half-and-half sort of knowledge which the poets had introduced among the Jews. It is a fact confirmed by the experience of all ages, that as abridgments or auxiliary books are multiplied and brought into general vogue, true learning suffers and decreases ; because the use of these auxiliaries affords a certain degree of acquaintance with the subject of which they treat, which places the mere pretender to knowledge on a level with the truly learned, not only in his own conceit, but likewise in the estimation of mankind generally. The consequence is, that sound learning and profound knowledge are disregarded, the man of real and extensive talents becomes apathetic for want of encouragement, and, as he sinks in the estimation of the world, and makes room for the mere pretender, the rising generation are exposed to all dangers which presumption combined with ignorance can engender. Maimonides wished to preserve his people from these dangers. He required that every Jew who knew Hebrew should become conversant with all the tenets and precepts of Judaism ; but he insisted that the knowledge to be acquired ought to be clear and complete ; that the views and ideas of the Jew should not be misled by any *ignis fatuus* which the harmonious lines of a poet might throw in his way, but should be enlightened with the full gleam of history, and be guided by the logical investigation of causes, occasions, and effects. Sound and correct views of society, such as Rabbinism either teaches or affords the opportunity of inculcating, form the basis of his undertaking ; and on this basis he

has methodically erected his structure with the materials which the unmethodical Talmud furnished him in abundance. The necessity of such a compilation had long been felt, and became more and more apparent, as in process of time the Talmud came to be less generally understood ; as the language in which it is composed was not reconcilable with the study of the Hebrew language and its grammar, which at that time prevailed among the Jews. This obsolete language of the Talmud, which ceased to be current even among the learned, with the closing of the Babylonian schools, had rendered it needful for Rashi to compose his commentaries on the Talmud, nearly a century before the labours of Maimonides ; while the want of method in the Talmud, and the manner in which subjects dissimilar in their nature, and without any direct affinity to the matter in question, are there introduced and placed in juxta-position with each other, pointed out the necessity of a methodised abridgment to the great R. Isaac Al-phes, who had accordingly produced his meritorious work, the “Alphesi,” nearly a century before the *יר הרוקח* “strong hand,” was written. These almost simultaneous labours of Rashi and the Al-phes, belonging as they did to schools and systems essentially different, prove how deeply the want of a proper illustration of the Talmudic code was felt. But, however praiseworthy the zeal of the Al phes had been, his views were less expanded, and his work altogether more limited in its plan and purpose, than the masterly production of Maimonides, to whom the honour is due of having produced the most full, comprehensive, and clear system of Talmudic legislation, methodically arranged, and free from all those extrinsic admixtures with which the parent work abounds.

The great merits of his undertaking were speedily and generally acknowledged. The fame of Moses the Egyptian was at once established, and an honourable rank assigned to him among the worthies of Israel. The work had scarce appeared, ere numerous copies were taken, which,

by means of the schools at Damascus and Alexandria, were widely promulgated among the various congregations of Israel. The name and work of Maimonides commanded the highest admiration; the most learned Jews directed their questions, on points of law, and in cases of conscience, to him, whose answers were generally received as the most correct, and his decisions acted upon accordingly. Prayers for his health and life were daily offered up in all the synagogues of Africa, Syria, and Asia Minor; and his kindness, urbanity, and condescension attached to him numerous pupils, who came from countries far and near, venerated him as a sage, and loved him as a father.

We must not feel surprised, if this sudden and universal fame of a man, who, but a very few years before, had been compelled to fly from his native city, pursued by the vindic-

tive fanaticism of two hostile sects, and who by both had been execrated as an infidel and heretic, should have excited envy and jealousy in many who felt that their reputation was eclipsed by his; or that the rancour and hatred which had combined to drive him from Cordova, were but ill appeased or satisfied at the honours which everywhere were paid to the great name of R. Moses bar Maimon. But, if his enemies and detractors were numerous, his friends and admirers were still more so. Even the most obstinate of his opponents were compelled to own, that the merits of his work justified his fame; but while they made the admission, they were most venomous in their attacks upon his person and principles, until the publication of the *Moreh Hannebochim* afforded them the long-wished-for opportunity of assailing his writings.

(*To be continued.*)

V. THE MESSIAS.

BY MAIMONIDES.

Yad Hachazakah, "THE STRONG HAND."

VOL. IV., BOOK XIV., CHAP. II.

THE anointed King Messiah, who is hereafter to arise, will restore the kingdom of David, and re-establish its former sovereignty. He will rebuild the temple, and assemble (collect, or gather) the dispersed of Israel. All the laws will then again be administered as in former days: Sacrifices will again be brought: The Sabbatical year and jubilee will be observed in conformity with all its enactments in the law: And whosoever doth not believe in him, or does not hope for (and expect) his coming, has not only denied and rejected all the other prophets, but also the law of our teacher Moses. For that law bears testimony to his, Messiah's, coming, when it says, "The Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. And though thy dispersed be driven out unto the

utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee." (Deut. xxx. 3, 4) This explicit declaration of the holy law comprises all that has been said on the subject by the various prophets. Even in the prophecy of Balaam, the Messiah is likewise mentioned; for there we find two Messiahs (anointed Kings) distinctly predicted. The first is David, who saved Israel from their foes: And the second is that one of his descendants who will hereafter arise and liberate Israel from the hand of the sons of Edom (in the last days). The prophecy of Balaam says, "I shall see him, but not now," (Numb. xxiv. 14,) in allusion to David. "I shall behold him, but not nigh," relative to the King Messiah. "There shall come a star out of Jacob," in allusion to David. "And a sceptre shall arise out of Israel," relative to the King Messiah. "And shall smite the corners of Moab," in allusion to David; of

whom it is written, "And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line," &c. (2 Sam. viii. 2.) "And destroy all the children of Seth," relative to the King-Messias; of whom it is written, "He shall have dominion from sea to sea." (Psalm lxxii. 8.) "And Edom shall be a possession," in allusion to David, of whom it is said, "And all they of Edom became David's servants." (2 Sam. viii. 14.) "Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies," relative to King-Messias, of whom it is said, "And Saviours shall ascend Mount Zion, to judge the mount of Esau." (Obad. i. 21.)

Moreover, when the Israelites are commanded to appoint cities of refuge for the involuntary homicide, we find it stated in the law, "And if the Lord thy God enlarge thy boundaries, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three." (Deut. xix. 8, 9.) This has never yet come to pass, and the Lord giveth no commandment in vain. It is needless to adduce any proofs or quotations from the prophetic books with respect to this matter, (the advent of Messias,) as they are full of predictions thereof.

Do not suppose that it is needful the King-Messias should perform either signs or wonders (such as inverting the order of nature, or resuscitating the dead, or other miraculous deeds,) according to the opinions which fools entertain of him. Such is not the case; for, behold! R. Akebah was a great sage, and one of the wise men of the Mishna; and he became armour-bearer, or esquire, to Ben-Cozibah the king, whom he declared to be the Messias. And not only R. Akebah, but all the wise men of that age, considered Ben-Cozibah to be the King-Messias, until, for his sins, he was slain; when his death convinced them that they were mistaken in his character. But the sages did not

require of him either token or wonder.

The fundamental principles of this matter are as follow: This law—which has been given to us through Moses our teacher, (peace be with him!)—together with its statutes and enactments, is immutable, and in force for ever, and until the end of time; nothing is to be added thereto, nor must ought be diminished therefrom. And whosoever does either add, or diminish, or pervert the interpretation of the law, or assign a mystical or allegorical sense to the commandments, contrary to their plain and obvious meaning; such an one is decidedly a liar, an evildoer, and an infidel (Epicurean). Should a king arise of the house of David, who observes the law and performs the commandments, as did David his progenitor, according to the written and the oral law; who obliges all his people Israel to be steadfast in their obedience to the Divine precepts, and to repair any infraction thereon, and fights the battles of the Lord, he may be considered as intended to be Messias the King. If he prospers in his undertakings, is victorious over all surrounding nations, rebuilds the temple in its appointed place, and gathers the dispersed exiles of Israel, then it is decided that he is the true Messias. But should he not prove successful to that extent, or should he be slain, it is then evident that he is not the Messias predicted and promised in Holy Writ; but he is like all those other just and pious kings of the house of David who are deceased; and the Lord only suffered him to arise, in order to try the faith of many: As it is written, "And some of them of understanding shall stumble; that they may become approved, elect, and purified, until the time of the end; because it is yet for a time appointed." (Deut. xi. 35.)

(To be continued.)

VI. ON THE NECESSITY OF ERECTING AN HOSPITAL FOR JEWS OF THE GERMAN AND POLISH COMMUNITIES IN LONDON.

ALTHOUGH, from the nature of our labours, our pages are devoted to the

literature of ages long by-gone, rather than to the events of the pre-

sent day, yet we feel ourselves called upon and bound to notice, and to afford our best aid to, any efforts that may tend to promote the moral or social welfare of our people; and, whenever an opportunity offers to alleviate the sufferings of our poorer brethren, we should reproach ourselves with a gross neglect of our most sacred duty were we to remain silent, and not, to the utmost reach of our feeble voice, call upon our readers generally, and on those of the house of Israel in particular, to second the benevolent exertions of the worthies who labour in the cause of humanity.

We have before us two circulars, both relating to the same subject, namely, the necessity of erecting an hospital for Jews of the German and Polish communities, in London; for, to their honour be it stated, the Jews of the Portuguese and Spanish community are already possessed of so necessary an asylum for the indigent sick. The one circular, in Hebrew and English, which appears to have been issued by a foreign Israelite, at present in London, after complimenting the British Jews on their philanthropy and charity, and enumerating the many benevolent institutions they have founded, proceeds, in strong terms, to censure their apathy in not providing a place of refuge for those of their poorer brethren, who, when ill, are either abandoned to their fate or compelled to seek a shelter in the general hospitals, open for the reception of every one. The wretched condition of the poor Jew, in such an hospital, the agitation of his mind, which, superadded to the agonies of his body, produce a state of frenzy and desperation utterly destructive of all hopes of his ever recovering from his sickbed; the struggle between the sense of religious duty, which forbids his partaking of the food provided for him in the general hospital, and the irresistible force of hunger, which eventually gets the better of his scruples, and forces him to eat at the expense of his soul's repose; the horror with which he finds himself

abandoned and alone, contemplating the near approach of death, and forsaken by the commiserating voices of his brethren, whose fervent prayers would soften the pangs of dissolution; all this is depicted in terms the most glowing and pathetic; and the necessity of remedying this crying evil, together with the facility with which that remedy may be supplied, are pointed out, in language so forcible, that we trust few of our brethren will be able to resist the appeal.

The second circular steps in to give effect to the first, by stating that several gentlemen, members of the German and Polish community of Jews in London, who had formed a Society for dispensing relief to the indigent sick at their own dwellings, have come to a determination to erect an hospital, and call upon the Jewish public to enable them, by liberal contributions, to carry their benevolent purpose into effect. We understand that this Society is already possessed of funds to the amount of nearly £2,000, and that annual contributions, nearly to the extent of £300, have been subscribed.

We need not say, that we most heartily wish them every success. It is true that we cannot sufficiently blame the apathy which reserved for the year 5595 (1835) the discovery that an institution so essentially important is necessary. But such is the high opinion we entertain of the benevolent feelings of our people, we are confident, now that their attention has been called to the subject, that a Jewish hospital, worthy of ranking with the noble structures which the philanthropy of our Christian countrymen has raised, will soon greet the eye and comfort the heart of many an unfortunate being, who, suffering under the complicated ills of poverty and disease, will invoke the blessing of an all-bounteous and merciful Providence, on those who, pitying his misery, have prepared an asylum for him, in which he may, should such be his fate, breathe his last amidst the consolations which our holy religion affords him.

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VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מוסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

יין לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 357.)

BEN ZOMA said, "Who is truly wise? He who is willing to receive instruction from all men: As it is written, 'From all my teachers I gather understanding.' Who is truly a hero? He who subdues his passions: As it is said, 'He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he who governeth his own temper, than he who taketh a city.' Who is truly rich? He who is contented with his lot: As it is said, 'When thou shalt eat of the labour of thy hands, then happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.' Happy shalt thou be in this world, and it shall be well with thee in the world to come. Who is truly honourable? He who honoureth the creations of his God: As it is written, 'For them who honour me will I honour, and they who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.'"

COMMENTARY. *Who is truly rich,* &c.—How very different is the lot of him who is contented with the portion which providence is pleased to bestow on him! He is not called מת, "dead," but חי, "alive." As Holy Writ declares, "But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God, חיים, are alive every one of you this day." (Deuteronomy iv. 4) The meaning is, You who cleave to the Lord your God in love and veneration, who rejoice in his bounty, and feel convinced that whatsoever befalls you, is from His hand: That if your portion is scanty, He is the all-wise Judge who deems it proper not to confide more to your share, for the sake of your eternal welfare: Or if your portion is large, if affluence or great riches have been bestowed on you, He is the all-bounteous God who deigns to confide to you more than to others; not merely that you may have, and hold for yourselves and your heirs until the end of the world; but that you may be His faithful stewards, dispensing

His blessings to the apparently less favoured among your brethren; to whom, in gifting you with abundant wealth, He has given a draft upon your benevolence; so that, by the proper use of the boon He has bestowed on you, and obeying His will, ye may secure your eternal welfare. You all, rich or poor, who thus cleave unto the Lord God, ye are alike sensible of His goodness, and alive to those nobler feelings of joy and happiness which arise from the certainty, that His paternal regard is not withdrawn from you; and that whether your share of this world's perishable treasures be large or small, His goodness destines you alike for that eternal and transcendent bliss, the greatness of which exceeds all power of description, so that even the language of inspiration only exclaims, "How great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men." (Psalm xxxi. 19) Ye are

therefore, truly alive, not only in this transient, but in another, everlasting, state of existence. And as it is only those who are thus resigned to the dispensation, and satisfied with the station and lot, which the Divine goodness has assigned to them, who can in the truest and fullest sense of the word be considered as alive; the Sacred Psalmist contrasts them with those discontented mortals of whom we have already spoken, and whom he calls dead, when he says, "He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great: The Lord will increase his blessings on you and on your children: Ye are blessed of the Lord, who has made the heavens and the earth; the heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth hath He given to the sons of men: The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence. But we will bless the Lord from this time forth, and for evermore, Hallelujah!" (Psalm cxv. 13—18.) The meaning is, All those who fear the Lord, and who acknowledge His infinite perfection, know that He is all-wise, almighty, and all-merciful; that consequently being all-wise, He acts not without a motive; being almighty, He acts not without a sufficient motive; and being all-merciful, He acts not without a beneficent motive; that, therefore, their station in life, and portion of this world's goods, together with all the trials and vicissitudes they may experience during their earthly pilgrimage, having been determined by Him, their lot is doubtless the best, and most conducive to their lasting welfare: Accordingly, they are not only resigned, but satisfied, cheerful, and happy, considering whatsoever betides them, as a blessing of the Lord, intended to purify and chasten their hearts, and to render them worthy of that "great goodness which the Lord has laid up for those that fear him." And as they advance in life, and draw nearer to that goal which frees the soul, and enables it to wing its flight to its celestial home; that blessing becomes more apparent and increasing, not only to themselves, but to their offspring likewise; whom they have

brought up virtuously and to fear the Lord. Thus they are always blessed of the Lord, with a blessing not only heavenly and eternal, but also earthly and temporal, inasmuch as the balm of contentment, while it blunts the pangs of affliction, heightens the enjoyments of prosperity. Having thus shown us the great importance of fearing the Lord, and the salutary consequences which thence result to us, the Sacred Singer continues to tell us that this true, because inward, happiness it is altogether in our power to secure; and that if we fail in so doing, it is our own fault; therefore he says, "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth hath he given to the sons of men;" while the celestial regions and the bliss they afford are awarded only to those whom the Supreme Judge of the universe, in His mercy and justice, deems worthy thereof, the earth is freely given to the sons of men. It is the great arena in which vice with its sinful temptations and allurements combats virtue with its fixed principles and obedience to the Divine laws.

The earth and its fulness belong as much to the God-fearing and pious, as to the arrogant and iniquitous; the essential difference between these two classes is, that while the one uses the other abuses the gifts of God; while the one is tranquil and happy, because contented with the portion which has been allotted to it by divine providence, and envies not nor seeks to violate the rights of those who are gifted with a larger portion of this world's goods; the other is ever restless and unhappy, because dissatisfied however abundantly provided for; and, envying, it seeks to violate the rights of others, because it prefers what it has not to what it has. But this difference of disposition, which so strongly marks these two classes, ceases not with their earthly existence: As for those whose hearts are so entirely absorbed by terrestrial matters, that they are dead to every nobler aspiration of the soul, they cannot praise the Lord, but sink into everlasting silence; while those who are alive

to their better destiny hereafter praise the Lord, not only here, but for evermore.

From all that has been hitherto said, it becomes evident, that not accumulated hoards or immense treasures constitute true riches; but that it is a contented mind, which, happy under every dispensation of providence, is alike satisfied, be its portion large or small, which alone merits the designation of עשיר, "truly rich." He is happy when alone, and when in the society of others. He enjoys their conversation, and profits by their instruction. It is indifferent to him whether his associates are clad in the stateliness of wealth, or in the mean garb of poverty; whether their coffers are filled with gold, or whether want and wisdom are their portion: For, in his intercourse with them he seeks not to increase his own stores: The gift that he can bestow on the destitute he offers with a cheerful heart and a friendly voice: Are his means large? his gift is commensurate, and he thanks his God: Are his means scanty, and his gift but small? he still thanks his God that, out of his own pittance, he could comfort the heart and administer to the wants of a suffering brother. What his own family stands in need of, he affords them willingly; for his confidence is firm in the Lord, who sends him each day his daily bread. He can, with a joyous heart, devote himself to the service of the Lord; for his soul is not fettered by terrestrial enjoyment, or absorbed in its attachment to the good things of this world, but can exalt itself to that purity of love and veneration which renders our worship acceptable to the Deity. Therefore it is that Solomon establishes true joy as distinguishing the wise and virtuous from the greedy worldling, whose restless disposition permits him to know no happiness: Accordingly he says, "For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner he giveth travail to gather and to heap up." (Ecclesiastes ii. 26.)

In support of the view which he has taken of the nature of true riches, our teacher adduces the

authority of Holy Writ, which declares, "When thou shalt eat of the labour of thy hands, then happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee." (Psalm cxxviii. 2.) The psalmist does not enumerate gold, nor pearls, nor precious stones; he does not name stately mansions, or wide-spread fields covered with flocks and herds, warehouses filled with costly goods, or ships ploughing the ocean loaded with the rich produce of distant climes: None of all these appendages of wealth and power is deemed worthy of mention by the Sacred Singer when he describes the man who is truly rich and happy. All that he allots to such a man is the power of enjoying freely the produce of his labour. He wishes not that this his favourite of providence should be nursed in the lap of indolence and luxury, or that he should seek happiness in accumulated wealth. No! all that he stands in need of who feareth the Lord, and walketh in his ways, is health to pursue his daily labour, and content to sweeten the produce of that labour: Then he is blessed and happy here on earth, and it shall be well with him hereafter, when his fear of the Lord and his joyous resignation to the dispensations of the divine providence meet with their imperishable reward.

Who is truly honourable—After having instructed us in the nature of true wisdom, true valour, and true riches, our teacher next proceeds to place before us that second great gift of fortune which at all times, and in every clime under the sun, has excited the desire of man, namely honours, and distinctions yielded to him by his fellow creatures. And though honour is the great end and aim of the ambitious man, and of his exertions, who spurns riches and sacrifices them to his ardent thirst for distinction, nevertheless the last rank in the gradation of those qualities and gifts of fortune, which are most highly prized by men, is by our teacher assigned to outward honour and distinction. But, lest we should be mistaken, and suppose that by the word "honourable," he means those too who enjoy the abject adoration of the mob;

those who by the caprice of fortune have risen above their fellow creatures, or who through the accidents of birth are placed in a rank they could never have attained by their exertions; lest we should suppose that he means either of these, or even of those who are distinguished by greater mental endowments or superior proficiency in any art or science, our teacher takes care to inform us who is truly honourable; and in support of his definition to cite the highest authority, that of Holy Writ. As he has told us that true wisdom does not consist in the acquisition or display of great knowledge, but in that inward desire of improvement which derives instruction from every object in nature, animate or inanimate; that true heroism does not consist in fearlessness, and contempt of danger, but in the inward mastery of the passions, which enables us to suppress the violence of our temper and desires; that true riches do not consist in heaps of gold, and large possessions, but in that inward spirit of contentment, which enables a man to be happy in every situation in which the Divine Providence may place him; so he (our teacher) now tells us, that true honour does not consist in the outward deference paid to us by others, or in the deep bows, and wreathed smiles, with which our presence is greeted, or in the loud acclamations, rending the sky, with which our appearance is hailed. No; all these have been the portion of many a monster who disgraced humanity, of many a fool whose crimes, and whose weakness, provoked the contempt of those who most lowly prostrated themselves before him. No; all such marks of outward respect cannot constitute true honour; and, therefore, it is not he that enjoys only them, whom Holy Writ calls "honourable." But it is he who, impressed with sincere veneration for the Lord his God, honours Him in every one of His creatures: For the word our teacher uses is, בְּרִיּוֹת, "creatures," and is, therefore, not restricted to the human species alone, but to every created being; as all creation does alike demonstrate the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of the

Creator. He who is impressed with this great truth does not stand in need of being told, that he must respect his fellow-men, who, like himself, are created in the image of his God: He needs not be reminded of the duties which he owes them; for every object in creation recalls him to the contemplation of his God, whose holy law is thus ever present to his mind. Thus, honouring God in every one of his creatures, he will ever be mindful of what he owes to himself, to them, and to his and their Creator; no crime, or heinous transgression of the laws of God, will ever defile the purity of his soul. And though, as the offspring of frail humanity, weakness and error will always, to a certain degree, be his portion: As the wise monarch declares, "There is no man on the face of the earth who never sinneth;" (2 Chronicles vi. 36;)—yet the conviction of his wrong will produce within him that spirit of sincere penitence and contrition which is acceptable to Him who has declared, "I desire not the death of the sinner, but that he should repent him of his evil ways." (Ezekiel xviii. 23.) Such a man it is whose soul is free from the stain of crime, who performs his duties to all his fellow-creatures, and who honoureth the great Creator in every object of His creations. Such a man is truly honourable, for he combines within himself every one of those desirable qualities which mankind prize most. He is truly wise; for without true wisdom he could never have arrived at the knowledge of the Deity, whom he contemplates in His works: He is truly valiant; because, as we have already demonstrated, true valour consists in the fear of offending the Lord; which fear he has ever before his eyes: He is truly rich; for who more than he can feel and be satisfied with the fulness of the Divine blessings, which every new-drawn breath confers on him? And thus uniting within himself wisdom, valour, and riches, he is truly honourable, if ever man deserved so to be.

In support of the view he has taken of true honour, our teacher

cites the words of Holy Writ, "For them that honour me I will honour, and they who despise me shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Samuel ii. 30.) These words were uttered in the name of the Lord by the man of God, who reproved Eli, on account of his not checking the arrogant conduct of his vain-glorious and wicked sons; who, in order to display their hereditary importance to the Israelites, desecrated the altar of God, and rendered his sacrifices subordinate to their avarice and ambition. After upbraiding their father for his criminal weakness in suffering them thus arrogantly to transgress the commands of the Deity, and to defy His laws, the man of God, denouncing the punishments that await them, utters these remarkable words, "For them that honour me, I will honour," &c., and thereby affords us a most important and valuable lesson; namely, that the only way in which we can honour God is, by being obedient to His commandments, and yielding due veneration to His revealed will: Whereas, he who does not perform the commands of God, or obey His law, is deficient in that veneration which is due to the Lord: He is therefore taxed with despising that God whose law he violates; and his punishment is, that he is "lightly esteemed." Though his prosperity and power may extort the semblance of respect, yet his lawless and unprincipled conduct renders him an object of inward detestation and contempt to every man.

From all that our teacher has here told us respecting the qualities of the mind, and the gifts of fortune

which mankind prize most, it is evident, that there is but one object worthy of our pursuit, and if we succeed in attaining that one object, we are supremely gifted with every thing that human ambition deems most worthy of its exertions. That one thing is, the fear of the Lord. He who is possessed of that fear is truly wise, valiant, rich, and honourable; and combines within himself all those gifts and qualities which form not only the transient happiness of our mortal career, but secure the everlasting felicity of our immortal souls: Accordingly the Prophet declares, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his valour, nor yet the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord who exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." (Jer. ix. 23, 24.) Observe, that the Prophet does not caution men against glorying in true wisdom, true valour, or true riches: The exhortation cautions every man against "his (own) wisdom," "his (own) valour," and "his (own) riches;" meaning thereby, those qualities and gifts of fortune which the mass of mankind value, but which are perishable. Whereas, the only subject worthy of man's admiration and pursuit is, that knowledge and understanding of the Deity which leads to the fear of the Lord, and engenders true wisdom, valour, riches, and honour, evinced in actions, such as those of whom the Deity declares, "In these I delight."

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 360.)

CHAPTER XXV.

If we examine all the positive commandments contained in the law, we do not find one among them all which in itself is sufficient to advance man to that perfection of purpose,

the attainment of which is the great object of the law, except repentance. The aim and purpose of the different precepts given, and commandments enacted, in the law, is, that man shall thereby arrive at the highest degree of human perfection,

which is to love the Lord, (as we have fully demonstrated in the 35th chapter of our third division,)* and by means of which, man obtains that high and everlasting bliss which is ordained for the soul: But we find, that the same consummation results from sincere repentance and contrition, as we read in the 30th chapter of Deuteronomy, which shows us the great efficacy of this commandment, and that in its nature it is more comprehensive, and in its effects more potent, than prayers. For though these are availing to obtain the particular object of the petitioner's supplications, yet they are not sufficient to confer on him that eventual reward, which is the perfection of his purpose, and which repentance does obtain for him. We therefore have deemed it proper, having treated of prayers, next to direct our attention to repentance, rather than any other of the commandments of the law. Accordingly we say, that if we properly examine into the 30th chapter of Deuteronomy, we there read, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his judgments," &c. (verses 15, 16.) From the context and evident connexion of the whole chapter it is plain, that Holy Writ here speaks of repentance, inasmuch as the chapter begins with the words, "And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt reflect in thine own heart among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and obey his voice," &c.: (verses 1, 2 :) And continues, "If thou return unto the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul." (verse 8.) Holy Writ next describes the great excellence of repentance, and how perfectly it is within the reach of every man, saying, "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is

not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea, for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." (verses 11—14.) This is evidently said of repentance only, which is fully proved by the concluding words, "In thy mouth and in thy heart to do it:" Inasmuch as repentance depends on confession of the mouth and contrition of the heart, as we shall more fully explain hereafter. The Ramban* also explains this passage as speaking of repentance; the high importance and salutary influence of which is here dwelt upon by Holy Writ, as if it had said: From its great and prevailing efficacy, this commandment (repentance) were well worthy that thou shouldst undergo every hardship, and use every exertion, even to climb the heavens, (were such a thing possible,) or to traverse the ocean in order to attain thereto. This great excellency and value of repentance is confirmed by reason, which does not dictate that any atonement, or expiation whatsoever should absolve the sinner from the punishment of his guilt: As the prophet emphatically expresses it, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, or bow before the most high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression? the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah vi. 6, 7.) In thus rising in his offers from a simple sacrifice, even unto that which is most dear to man,—his own children,—and still questioning whether even the sacrifice of his dearest affections will atone for past sins, the prophet proves that, according to reason, and the necessary connexion between cause and effect, no possible expia-

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., page 6, *et seq.*

* R. Moses bar Nachman, commonly called Nachmanides.

tion ought to save the sinner from the consequence of his evil deeds; and much less should repentance and confession of the mouth produce that result which the prophet alludes to when he says, "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast stumbled by thine iniquity. Take with you words and return unto the Lord," &c. (Hosea xiv. 1, 2.) But as this important result is altogether dependent on the Divine mercy, Holy Writ is careful to exhort us, and to impress the value of repentance on our minds in the most forcible manner; and therefore it declares, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life," &c. (Deuteronomy xxx. 19.) After having pointed out to us how completely repentance is within our reach, in the words, "It is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart," &c., Holy Writ continues to exhort us: Thou canst not complain that this salutary and effectual means, which is to save thee from the effect of thy own misdeeds, is of so difficult a nature, or so completely beyond thy reach, that thou canst not obtain it: No, it is altogether in thy power, if thou wilt obey my precept; I place before thee life and the good; but if thou wilt slight and contemn it, the result to thee will be death and evil; therefore be careful not to despise this most efficacious of all means, which alone will secure life to thee. And in order that we may clearly perceive what kind of life is here meant, and that this eternal life is the especial aim and purpose of all the enactments of the law, Holy Writ tells us, "That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, that thou mayest obey His voice and cleave unto Him; for this is thy life and the length of thy days, that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." (Deut. xxx. 20.) The word חַיִּים, "thy life," denotes eternal life, the everlasting duration of the soul in its celestial abode; and אֲרוֹךְ יָמִים, "length of thy days," expresses a protracted existence on

earth and worldly prosperity; all of which is the reward of obedience to the Divine commandments, and still more of "loving the Lord."

The great and potent effects which we have described as resulting from repentance, apply, in their fullest extent, to that penitence only which is inspired by love of the Lord; for that repentance which springs from fear, although it likewise is acceptable and availing, cannot be considered as perfect repentance: Accordingly, our Rabbies say, "R. Simon ben Lakish has said, Great is the merit of penitence; for the penitent's premeditated sins are accounted to him as committed inadvertently: As it is written, 'Thou art stumbled by thine iniquities.' (Hosea xiv. 2.) The word עֲוֹנוֹת, 'iniquities,' denotes a 'wilful offence,' yet it is here held as a מִכְשׁוֹל, 'stumbling,' or "inadvertency." But did not the same R. Simon ben Lakish, on another occasion, say, "Great is the merit of repentance, for the penitent's wilful sins are accounted to him as meritorious actions: As it is written, 'If the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby?' (Ezek. xxxiii. 19.) There is no contradiction in these two sayings of R. Simon ben Lakish; for in the first he speaks of penitence caused by fear, and in the second of penitence inspired by love." (Talmud, treatise *Joma*, folio 86.)

It may perhaps be proper to examine on what our Rabbies found their assertion, "that to the penitent through fear his premeditated sins are accounted as inadvertencies." Justice dictates, that he who repents solely because he stands in dread of punishment, ought not at all to be benefited by his penitence; for those actions only can be considered as praiseworthy or blamable, as entitling man to reward or exposing him to punishment, which result from a man's free and deliberate choice, uninfluenced by any external control or constraint. But as repentance caused by fear of punishment is not the result of man's free choice, but arises from an external influence, namely, the terror which seizes on his soul and controls its

liberty, it becomes a question why such forced penitence should at all be availing or entitle man to any reward? To this question we reply, that there are two kinds of repentance through fear. The one is, that repentance which springs from the sufferings caused by actual punishment; when writhing under the lash, man is like a disobedient slave, who implores mercy and promises obedience while his master is punishing him, but as soon as the rod is withdrawn, and the sense of pain has subsided, he returns to his former disobedience; as was the case with Pharaoh, who, whilst suffering under the weight of a grievous punishment, exclaims, "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked;" (Exodus ix. 27;) but the instant the actual punishment ceased, and the terrors it had caused were subsided, he relapses into his former arrogance and disobedience. (Exodus ix. 34, 35.) Such conduct proves in the most decided manner that the repentance which he professed was extorted by the pains of the punishment and the dread of instant annihilation; it is therefore not at all a voluntary act or emanation of man's free and uncontrolled will, and, accordingly, it is not effectual or availing. But there is another kind of repentance through fear, not caused by the pains of actual punishment, when man, in the midst of prosperity, still has the awe and fear of the Lord before his eyes, and dreads offending the great God, because he believes that whatever befalls him is under the cognizance of providence, which rewards good deeds, and punishes evil actions. In this belief he is unlike the other class of penitents through fear, to which Pharaoh belonged, who imagine that whatever befalls them is owing to the natural course of events or to accident. This was the cause why Pharaoh continued impenitent; for as soon as the immediate pressure of affliction was removed, he returned to his former way of thinking. And even after the first-born of Egypt were slain, when he heard that the Israelites were entangled in the land, he instantly reverted to his old belief, and ascribed all the fearful and

wondrous punishments that had befallen him to accident, and this belief it was which emboldened him to pursue the Israelites; thus fully proving that the penitence which at one time he professed was forced, but not voluntary, or the result of conviction.

This view will enable us to explain the true meaning of Holy Writ when it says, "For I have hardened his heart, and the hearts of his servants;" (Exodus x. 1;) by which it would appear as if the Lord interfered with the free will of a sinner, and, rendering him stiff-necked, prevented him from becoming penitent. Such, however, is not the case, nor does the Sacred Writer intend to convey any such idea; but the real meaning is as follows:—When any misfortune threatens or befalls the sinner, he suddenly becomes amended, and returns to the Lord, out of dread of the punishment which is impending over him; as Pharaoh did when he confessed, "I have sinned this time: The Lord is righteous," &c. (Exodus ix. 27.) But as this repentance appears to be the result of outward constraint, and not of free and deliberate choice, the Lord affords the sinner an opportunity of evincing his real disposition, by causing that sentiment of terror to subside, which, in the first instance, had seized on his soul, and controlled its workings, so that he becomes restored to the free exercise of his volition. If, then, he returns to his former misdeeds, and, like Pharaoh, assigns the afflictions he has experienced to the natural course of events, or to accident, and not to the superintendence of Providence, then it is said of him, that "the Lord has hardened his heart," because He has withdrawn from the soul of the sinner that sentiment of terror which overawed its workings, and has restored him to the uncontrolled exercise of his own free will. In this sense it is that the gates of repentance are closed against the evil-doer, but not, by any means, that the Deity interferes to prevent the sinner exercising his free will for his own good, or to steel his heart against the pangs of conscience, and

the voice of repentance. Far be it from us [to entertain any such idea of the Holy One, (blessed be HE!) who expressly declares, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord; wherefore, repent ye and live." (Ezekiel xviii. 32.) On the contrary, the Deity restores to the sinner the uncontrolled exercise of his own free will, which for an instant had been suspended by the influence of terror and pain; and, free from external constraint of any kind, he is left to choose his own way. In the same sense we explain the expression applied to Sihon, king of the Amorites, by Holy Writ, when it says, "For the Lord thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate." (Deuteronomy ii. 30.) Sihon, from his many crimes and misdeeds, merited punishment; but when he heard of the many wondrous events which attended the exit of the Israelites from Egypt, and the terrible punishment which had befallen Pharaoh, he became afraid of attacking the Israelites: This sentiment of fear mastered his soul, and suspended the exercise of his free will. When, however, he found that the Israelites had applied to the king of Edom for leave to traverse his territories, and that, having been refused by that king, who marched against them with a numerous and powerful host, they had retreated, and avoided the combat; that their application to the king of Moab, as is related by Jephthah, (Judges xi. 7,) having been treated in a similar manner, they had again withdrawn, and shunned the contest; the fear which had seized upon his soul suddenly subsided. He no longer looked upon the Israelites as under the immediate protection of the Deity; and, having resumed the free exercise of his own will, free from that external influence, fear, which, during a short time, had interposed a salutary check on his conduct, he resumed that arrogant

pride which was the leading trait of his character, and which prompted him to convince the world that he was more valiant and mighty than the kings of Moab and of Edom. Therefore, he went forth, not like them, merely to defend his frontiers, but to seek Israel in the wilderness, and there to assail them, as we read, "Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel, into the wilderness, and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel." (Numbers xxi. 23.) And this withdrawing of all external influence, and restoring him to the full and free exercise of his own volition, is in the case of Sihon, as in that of Pharaoh, called, "hardening his heart:" Not as if, in either instance, the Deity had interfered to prevent man from making the best use of his free will for his own good; but that, on the contrary, by the withdrawal of that external influence which for a time had acted as a check on his actions, he was restored to the fullest use of his own uncontrolled choice; and, consequently, at liberty to follow the bent of his inclinations: And as he had not profited by the feeling which had arisen within him, but had, as soon as that feeling subsided, relapsed into his former iniquities, the withdrawal of that feeling, which left him at liberty so to relapse, is called in Holy Writ, "The Lord hardened his heart." This explanation does, we trust, fully prove, that in no instance is it ever asserted in Holy Writ, that the Divine interposition does actively prevent a man from exercising his volition, or listening to the voice of repentance; but that, on the contrary, if at any time man has been restricted in his full liberty of choice, by a feeling of terror having mastered his soul, that feeling is suffered to subside, in order that, restored to his own uncontrolled and free will, man may act as he thinks proper.

(To be continued.)

III. THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT AMONG THE ISRAELITES PREVIOUS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MONARCHY.

(Concluded from page 363.)

EVERY affair which concerned the welfare of the whole nation, was disposed of in a general assembly of the elders of the congregation; over which the chief judge, or high priest, (who at that time was in office,) presided. The usual place of assembly was before the entrance to the tabernacle, though sometimes general assemblies were held in other places, which had been specially appointed for the purpose. As long as the Israelites wandered in the desert, the signal for assembling was, the priests blowing the silver trumpets; but when Israel became settled in the land of the Lord, and resided in cities, townships, and villages, the time and place of assembling was made known to the people by special messengers, dispatched for that purpose throughout the whole extent of the land. When the trumpets sounded once, the *Nassim*, "princes," and *Roshi Alpha Israel*, "chiefs of the thousands of Israel," were called upon to assemble; but if the trumpet was sounded twice, it was a signal for the whole community to assemble before the entrance of the tabernacle.

If we examine the Sacred Scriptures we find that these two species of assemblies are there designated by two distinct appellations, עדה and קהל. The first, עדה, "congregation," was composed of the princes, the chiefs, the officers, and those who were delegated to conduct the affairs of the whole community; whereas, the second, קהל, "general assembly," comprised every individual member of the community of Israel, young or old. After they were settled in the land of their inheritance, the second species of assembling was but seldom resorted to, as the meeting of the princes, chiefs, and delegates, was sufficient to conduct the ordinary affairs of the nation, by whom they had been invested with full powers to act in their name and on their behalf. These delegates are called קריאי מועד, "summoned

or deputed of the assembly;" also נשיאי, "princes," פקודי "delegates," וקני העדה, or "elders of the congregation." To such "congregations," Moses communicated the commandments which the Lord gave him for the children of Israel; and the members of the congregation, in their turn, took care to instruct the people in, and to watch over, their obedience to the Divine commandments,—each member in the particular tribe and family which he represented. In these congregations, all matters of importance relating to the general welfare of the whole community, such as peace or war, were deliberated and decided on; while in the general assemblies of the whole people, the chief judges were either appointed to, or confirmed in, their authority. By such a full assembly of the whole nation, composed of men, women, and children, the Lord was proclaimed King of Israel, and every individual member pledged himself, his children, and descendants, to the remotest generation to be loyal, faithful, and true to their King.

The Lord, in the exercise of His sovereign power, gave them laws, statutes, and commandments: He reproved and corrected them when they were disobedient; and in order that they might at no time be ignorant of the will and pleasure of their King, He deigned to promise that He would from time to time vouchsafe to send them accredited messengers who should acquaint them with His supreme behests; and that the messengers speaking in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel, were in all things to be obeyed. This gracious promise He fulfilled when he sent them prophets, whose functions are thus described in the fundamental law: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not

hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deuteronomy xviii. 15—19.)

Thus we find three distinct species of government in force among the Israelites. The first was a pure theocracy, by which the Lord was actually King of Israel; and, by means of His special providence, directed the affairs of the nation, through messengers inspired and authorized by Him. The second species of government was that executed by the עדה, "congregation," over which the high priest or inspired judge presided, in the name of the Lord, assisted by the princes, elders, and delegates of the nation. The power exercised by this assembly, composed of the chiefs of the nation, has induced Josephus to represent the system of government which prevailed amongst the Israelites, previous to the establishment of the monarchy, as aristocratic: But in this he was evidently mistaken; for every one who carefully studies the history of the Sacred Scriptures will find that the power exercised by the עדה, or "congregation," was, by no means, unlimited, but subject to the control and approbation of the whole nation, in general assembly. And as thus the real sovereignty was vested in the people, who merely delegated to their elders a power which, at pleasure, they could resume, many have been induced to consider their system of government as democratic. We are, however, of opinion, that, in reality, it was a mixed government, at the head of which was the Supreme Ruler of the universe, under whose auspices the chiefs of the nation conducted the public affairs, with the approbation and consent of the whole nation, their brethren and equals, whom they had neither the right nor the power to coerce or subjugate, and who, whenever they were dissatisfied with the conduct of those to whom they had delegated power and authority, resumed the trust, and confided it to others more worthy of their good opinion.

As long as Moses was alive, the whole executive power was vested in

his hands, as the accredited messenger of the Lord, the King. But when, having brought the people out of Egypt, having been the chosen instrument to acquaint them with the fundamental law, which the Lord their Sovereign dictated to them, he had led them to the confines of the land they were to possess, his mission was ended, and he died; there arose not another like unto him, who combined within himself the legislative authority, as the accredited messenger, and in the name, of the Lord, and the executive power as the chief of Israel, in peace or war. Even the executive power was divided after his death. Joshua became the commander-in-chief of the armies of Israel, and led them forth to battle, to victory, and conquest; but Eleazar, the high priest, was his coadjutor in every measure of peaceful policy, and jointly with him presided over the congregation, as over the general assembly.

The foresight which governed every enactment of the fundamental law which the Lord bestowed on His chosen people, took care to point out to the Israelites a proper depository for the fulness of executive power, whenever, from circumstances, and the nature of his office, the high priest was not the most proper person to exercise the same. This depository was called הַשֹּׁפֵט, the "chief judge," and is, as such, first mentioned in Deut. xvii. 9. In him the whole executive power was vested: For we must not be misled by his title into the supposition, that he was merely a judge appointed to administer justice, for such was not the case. But to him was confided the supreme direction of affairs, not only in time of war, but also in time of peace; for we find, that several of these chief judges, as Ibzan of Bethlehem, Elon a Zebulonite, (Judges xii. 11, 12,) and many others, were appointed chief judges in times of profound peace. For as it was found absolutely needful, that the determinations and decrees of the "congregation" should be executed by a man possessed of sufficient weight and influence with the whole nation; and as these decrees were sometimes of a nature which the

high-priest could not execute, consistently with the duties of his high office; "General Assemblies" were convened, which elected some man worthy of the national confidence, to fill the high and important office of chief judge. This office, however great its power and influence, did not produce any revenue or emolument, to him who held it, and could not be bequeathed to his children. He was the chief and leader of the people, in peace or war, but could not promulgate any new law, nor impose any taxes on the people; for the fundamental law, which had been given by the Lord, the King of Israel, admitted of no alteration whatsoever; and no Israelite could be called upon to contribute to the necessities of the commonwealth, beyond the amount stipulated by the fundamental law. With these necessary limitations, the supreme executive power resided in the chief judge, whose sole care was to promote the welfare of the people, and to retain and confirm them in their obedience to the Lord. Accordingly, they were honoured by the people, who well knew, that it was neither ambition nor avarice which actuated their leader, who derived no emolument whatever from the discharge of his important duties; his only recompense being the prosperity of his fellow citizens, and their approbation of his conduct: Many of these judges were likewise prophets, or accredited messengers of the Deity, while some few of them were limited in their jurisdiction and not acknowledged by all Israel.

This pure form of government subsisted for centuries: As long as the nation remain steadfast in their allegiance to their heavenly King, and obedient to the fundamental law he had bestowed on them, they enjoyed prosperity and peace; but when they suffered themselves to be influenced by the pernicious example of their idolatrous neighbours, when they became disloyal to their King, and swerved from his law, disunion and defeat avenged their breach of allegiance. And it was only when, in their extreme affliction, they turned again to the Lord their God and King, that He raised them a chief

judge, who relieved them at once from intestine anarchy and foreign oppression. The books of Judges and 1 Samuel, (unto the eighth chapter,) acquaint us with the history of those days. And when the Israelites, incited by the example of surrounding nations, began to clamour against the aged Samuel, and to exclaim, "We will have a king over us; that we may also be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles," (1 Samuel viii. 19, 20,) it was with the Divine consent, that a king was appointed; nay, that appointment itself rested with their celestial Sovereign, who by lot decided who should be his lieutenant, and as such their earthly king. When, subsequently, this king rendered himself unworthy of his high station, by disobedience to the will of the Lord, and arbitrary conduct, the appointment was rescinded. The sovereignty was resumed by the Lord, the King of Israel, and by Him bestowed on another: As we read, "And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go. I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: For I have provided me a king amongst his sons." (1 Samuel xvi. 1.) And when David had been anointed by Samuel according to the Divine command, and by that act had been appointed lieutenant to their heavenly Sovereign, the nation acknowledged this appointment as legitimate, when all the tribes of Israel proclaimed him saying, "The Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel." (2 Samuel v. 2.) Thus it is evident, that even after the people were under the government of an earthly king, the Lord was still considered as the paramount Sovereign of Israel, and acknowledged as such by David, when he exclaims, "The Lord of hosts God is over Israel: let the house of thy servant be established before thee;" (2 Samuel vii. 26:) Thus confessing, that the Lord was the supreme King, and he himself but a dependent servant.

From all that we have hitherto

said, we trust our readers will be enabled to form some idea of the system of government which prevailed among the Israelites, and which we humbly hope the Lord, in his mercy, will soon again re-establish:

As it is written, "Their chieftain shall be of themselves, and their ruler shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me, saith the Lord." (Jer. xxx. 21.)

IV. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 366.)

SOME years after the *Yad Hachazakah* had been published, and met with that universal approbation it so justly merited, and while its author was in the plenitude of fame and consideration, he published the מורה הנבוכים, *Moreh Hannebochim*, "the Teacher of the perplexed," "or Guide of the erring," which was written between the years 1185—1194. There can be no doubt but that when Maimonides wrote the first of these two great works, he already carried the second in his mind. In the first he established a complete system of Jewish jurisprudence, founded on the authority of the Talmud; which, containing the oral law, acknowledged and obeyed by every Israelite, must ever remain the great source of Jewish law, but free from those heterogeneous admixtures with which the Talmud abounds. In the second, he strove to establish a complete system of Scriptural or Jewish philosophy; in which, silencing the cavils of the materialist, and putting the scoffing infidel to the blush, he proves the truth and authenticity of the Sacred Scriptures, and convinces his readers, that the Divine law revealed to Moses is in perfect accordance with the choicest gift the Deity has bestowed on man—his reason. When we consider the time and place in which this work was written, and the imperfect state in which most sciences then were, while a system of useless dialectics, derived from a mutilated and misunderstood Aristotle, disgraced the schools, which called it philosophy; while the mass of mankind, madly ranged under the banners of the cross or Koran, strove with blood-stained zeal, to tear from each other a spot of ground which

was the rightful inheritance of neither; and the stern rigour of fanaticism was the portion of every man, and bore sway in every household; at such a time and under such circumstances, we know not which most to admire,—the profoundness and justice, or the freedom and philanthropy of his thoughts. We do not mean to say, that he has not sometimes fallen into errors, for that is the common lot of humanity; but the goodness of his intention, and the spirit of genuine piety which animated him, are apparent even in his errors, which in themselves bear evidence to the greatness of his talents and attainments; since these errors are such as none but a mind richly stored, and filled with varied and extensive knowledge, could have fallen into. In the *Yad Hachazakah*, Maimonides was implicitly guided by the Talmud, the authority of which he sincerely respected: But in the *Moreh Hannebochim* his sources were within himself; the whole work is the production of his own reflections and researches. And after six centuries it still stands unrivalled, the guide and monitor of all those who, perplexed by doubts, seek to convince themselves of the truth of revelation.

The work was originally written in Arabic, under the name *Delalath el hairin*. The reason why he preferred the Arabic to the Hebrew, is variously assigned: By his enemies it is asserted, that he feared to bring the many new, not to say heretical, ideas, which his book contained, before the Jewish public, in a language which all could comprehend, and that therefore he preferred concealing them, particularly from the learned men of the French

school, by adopting a language not generally understood: His friends, on the contrary, assert that his reason was simply, because the Arabic language is more copious than the Hebrew, and that, from having continually studied the Arabic authors, who had written on philosophy, that language was more familiar to him, and completely in his power on philosophical subjects, than any other he was acquainted with. It appears to us that in this case, as in many others, the most charitable opinion is likewise the most true. Had concealment been the object of Maimonides, he would not at all have written, and would certainly not have been so active to encourage and assist those who translated his book into Hebrew. But it appears that in addition to the greater copiousness of the Arabic language, and his greater facility in writing it, Maimonides had another reason for his preference, namely, to counteract the pernicious influence of an apostate Jew, Samuel ben Judah, the physician, who embraced the creed of the Islam, took the name of *Asmuil*, and wrote with the most vehement bitterness against the Jews. As his works were mostly read by Mussulmen, the intention of Maimonides was to vindicate his brethren from the calumnies spread against them by this apostate.

The *Moreh Hannebochim* was by its author addressed to one of his favourite disciples, R. Joseph ben Achem. In the introduction to the work, he expressly and repeatedly states "that he does not at all write for the ignorant, or for beginners, but for those only, who, being perfectly conversant with law and with Jewish learning generally, wish to see how far human reason and philosophy lend their support to the authenticity of revelation; that, accordingly, it was not his intention to enter into lengthy explanations, but on the contrary, to content himself with giving hints, which, to the wise and learned, would be sufficiently clear, but the brevity of which would induce the ignorant to lay aside a book he did not understand, until by study and reflection he had prepared his mind for the task."

According to this plan he proceeds, so that his book, which to some serves as a perfect and rational commentary on all the obscure passages of Holy Writ, is to others an unintelligible rhapsody, abounding in error and heretical innovations.

It is no wonder that this latter should be the view in which the enemies of the great *Rambam*, envious of his well-earned fame, should choose to consider his work, and that every fanatic, every ignorant bigot, should join in the outcry they raised against him; but, conscious of his good intentions and the real merits of his work, the author remained unmoved. In a letter to his son R. Abraham, who at that time sojourned in Spain, he says, (alluding to the clamour raised against him and the disputes in which his son became involved on that account,) "I never doubted but that this work would be received as it actually has been received. But I am an old man; I do not covet fame, and willingly pardon all my enemies. I did not write this work (the '*Moreh*') in order to rise in the estimation of my people, or out of ambitious thirst for renown. No, I wrote it as a necessary and wholesome relaxation to my own mind, which thus became tranquilised and satisfied with respect to many doubts by which it had been assailed. If, having written it for my own use only, I nevertheless thought proper to publish the result of my researches to the world, it was because I considered it as a religious duty, and to afford others that satisfaction which I myself had derived from it. I knew that, when published, this work would fall into the hands of many a man whose malignant disposition would prompt him to seek out every questionable passage, in order to blazon forth my errors; and that many a fool would pronounce it useless and unintelligible, because he is not inclined or able to penetrate so far as I have succeeded in doing. But my object is attained, if now and then one individual, making proper use of my book, becomes confirmed in the knowledge of truth; and I have the satisfaction to know that many

whose good opinion ranks high with me, have expressed their unqualified approbation of such parts of my work as have come under their inspection. If, therefore, evil-disposed persons seek to misrepresent my good intentions, I console myself with the reflection, that even our teacher, Moses, was subject to the same fate in his day. Living with people whose thoughts are altogether mundane, all whose endeavours are terrestrial, and who have no idea of the spiritual, I must not feel surprised if they should accuse me of innovation or heresy, and compel every one, whose success in life depends on their good graces, to conceal or deny his approbation of me and my writings. The endeavour to convince such people is vain and fruitless; and I am sincerely grieved that you should at all concern yourself about their opinions; and particularly that you should have any contention with a certain Mar-Jachariah on that account, as he is self-conceited, opinionated, and vain enough to think himself the first man of the age. So that, although I am ready and willing to retract every error of which I am convicted, I cannot, and will not, combat with men of his way of thinking. I therefore advise thee not to waste thy words in answering him, and to submit to offence, but not to retaliate.*

While the great Rabbi thus treated every attack of his enemies with indifference, he rejoiced to see his opinions eagerly adopted and propagated by the most enlightened of his contemporaries. In order to render it of more general utility, a translation thereof into Hebrew was undertaken at Marseilles, by a Spanish Jew, R. Judah ben Salomon ben Al Hophni, called *Al-charisi*; but as the copy from which he translated was incorrect, it lessened the worth of his translation, which in itself was not very valuable, and never became very widely spread.

A subsequent translation, undertaken by R. Samuel ben Judah Ebn Tebbon, was, in every respect, more

successful. This learned Rabbi inherited the talents of his father, who, like himself, was celebrated as a translator of Arabic works. Having been requested by several of the principal Rabbies of Provence, to render the *Moreh Nebuchim* into Hebrew, he deemed it his duty to enter into a correspondence with the author, to send him specimens of the translation, and, at the same time, to request the Rambam, that he would explain to him the obscure passages in the book, and also correct those errors which had crept in through the carelessness of transcribers.

This application was favourably received by Maimonides, who, rejoiced to find that his work was greedily sought, and that the translation had been undertaken by a man competent to acquit himself of the task with honour to himself and to his author, bestowed particular attention on the answer he sent to R. Samuel. This answer consisted of two letters, one in Arabic, and one in Hebrew. In the first he explains all those obscure and doubtful passages which Ebn-Tebbon had pointed out to him, corrects the errors made by different transcribers, and calls the attention of R. Samuel to the best Arabic writers, the translations of whose works he recommends to him. In the Hebrew letter he expresses his admiration of the talents evinced by R. Samuel, and greatly praises the specimens which had been submitted to him.

In the course of his letter, he takes the opportunity of stating his own view of the manner in which translations ought to be conducted; a view which is so correct, and contains so excellent a rule, that we transcribe it for the benefit of all those who, like ourselves, may be engaged in the task of translating difficult works.

He says, "Whosoever wishes faithfully to translate a work must avoid rendering it literally, and must not be tied down by the too anxious study to adhere to the precise wording of his original. He should, on the contrary, seize upon the pre-

* Epist. Maimonid. II.

cise meaning of entire sentences, and then render that meaning in such phrases as are most in accordance with the idiom and genius of the language in which he is writing."

It is to be regretted that Maimonides did not survive the completion of Ebn-Tebbon's translation; as, had he revised it, there can be no doubt it would have received many corrections and improvements, and lost much of that obscurity which, notwithstanding the talents and efforts of the translator, still impedes the perfect comprehending of his work; the idiom of which retains too many traces of its Arabic origin.

While this translation spread, it made the work known to the Jews of Europe; while bigots were railing, and some fanatics even went so far as to excommunicate the book, *Moreh Nebochim*, and all those who should read it, or study the Greek and Arabic philosophy; * Maimonides, ignorant of this last gross outrage on his own fame, and on common sense, died, respected and beloved at Al-Cahiro, at the advanced age of seventy-five years, 1206. His loss was deeply lamented; at Alexandria and at Jerusalem funeral orations were pronounced in the synagogues, and public mourning assumed. His corpse was carried to Tiberias, where it was interred, and a monument erected, the inscription of which forcibly eulogized his great merits, and celebrated his well-earned fame. His enemies contrived to disfigure this inscription; but, subsequently, restored it to its pristine state, and joined in that general homage which the nation paid to this the greatest man it had produced since its exile and dispersion.

We have been induced thus fully to dwell on the writings and character of Maimonides, and particularly on the book *Moreh Nebochim*, because it forms an epoch in the Jewish literature of the middle ages, which

may be said to have reached its highest perfection in the person and works of Maimonides. Free from prejudice, his mind enlightened by philosophy, his heart warmed by genuine philanthropy and piety, gifted by nature with talents of the very highest order, with solidity of judgment and profundity of thought, and having improved his natural abilities by means of study the most intense, and application the most persevering, he stands pre-eminent in an age by no means deficient in great names; and when we consider the number and excellence of his works, and their evident tendency to improve his brethren and all mankind both mentally and morally, we think the eulogium by no means exaggerated which asserts, that ממשא ועזר משה לא קם כקשה "From Moses our teacher, unto Moses, (Maimonides,) there arose none like Moses." But, however great and, at present, universally acknowledged his merits are, it was not till long after his death, and until the spirit of contention had been carried to extremes, that the book *Moreh Nebochim* was permitted to assume that rank to which it is entitled from its merits.

The difference of opinion which existed between the Spanish and French schools, the disputes which divided the former into two parties, which, though apparently amalgamated in the schools of Lucena, had never become perfectly united; and the great question which had been more or less agitated since the days of R. Henoch, the son of R. Moses the Babylonian, and R. Joseph ben Stanas:—Whether Talmudic and profane studies are at all reconcilable,—which dispute had, through the exertions of the heads of the school at Lucena, been dormant for a considerable time:—All these causes of discord were suddenly revived by the appearance of the *Moreh Nebochim*, and caused a feud which, during nearly forty years, agitated and divided the house of Israel.

(To be continued.)

* Epist. R. David Kimchi ad R. Judam Alphachar. et Resp.

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VOL. II

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

י"ן לבנן. COMMENTS BY NAPHITALI HIRTS WESSELY.

(Continued from page 373.)

BEN AZAI said, "Run to the performance of the slightest commandment, and flee from the commission of sin; for the performance of one precept leads to another, and one sin involves the commission of another: As the reward of obeying one precept consists in the performance of another, so the recompence of sin is, the evil of committing another."

COMMENTARY. *Ben Azai said*—The name of this youthful Rabbi, who died ere he had attained the סמיכה, or "inauguration," was Simeon. The reason why he is not called by his own name, without the customary title of Rabbi, has been fully stated in a late number.*

Hasten to the performance, &c.—The maxims of our teacher are intended more fully to develop the precept which the preceding *tanai* (Ben Zoma) has given us, namely, "Who is truly a hero? He who subdues his passions." This subjection of the passions comprises the obedience to negative, as well as positive, commandments; for whether thy desires excite thee to do that which the law prohibits, or tempt thee to leave undone that which the law commands thee to perform: In either case, thou dost evince the valour of a true hero in subduing them, and keeping them prostrate under the sway of the Divine law. Our teacher keeps up the metaphor of Ben Zoma, and uses the word רץ, "run," to correspond with the גבור, "hero," of

that *tanai*; as we often find these two words coupled together in Holy Writ: For instance, "and rejoiceth like a hero," גבור, לרוץ, 'to run a race.'" (Psalm xix. 5.) ירוץ, "He runneth upon me," בגבור, "like a hero;" (Job xvi. 14;) and many other passages. For it is the great criterion of valour, that when danger is at hand, or the opportunity for doing bravely presents itself, the hero does not hesitate nor lag behind, but runs on cheerfully to confront the peril which threatens him: Therefore, our teacher says, "Thou who art a true hero, and subdueth thy passions, shouldst likewise evince that alacrity and readiness which is the distinctive mark of valour; but, whereas the mighty man only runs to perform an action worthy of his valour and fame; such as conquering a gallant foe, confronting a peril from which all other men shrink, and the like: Ordinary actions, such as any man can perform, he considers beneath his notice; thou, on the contrary, wherever obedience to a Divine commandment is in question, must be equally alert in the observance of a minor precept as if it were one of the very first mag-

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., p. 338.

nitude ; for in so doing, thou wilt prepare thy mind to the constant performance of the Divine behests ; so that matters of severe self-denial, and commandments which require the perfect prostration of thy desires and passions before the will of God, will appear easy unto thee, because thou art habituated to obedience. Thus thou wilt resemble the mighty warrior, who exerts his valour and skill in order to possess himself of a miserable village, because he knows that the possession of this village will secure to him the gain of that decisive battle, which will render him conqueror of an entire province ; and by diligently performing commandments of minor importance, thou facilitatest to thyself the observance of those greater ones on which thy future bliss depends. But there is another circumstance which ought to induce us to abide by the maxim of our teacher, and to devote our best energies to the performance of every commandment the Divine law prescribes. When we speak of the greater or less importance of these commandments, we can do so in one sense only, relative to each other ; thus the prohibition, "Thou shalt not kill," is of greater importance than, "Thou shalt not steal," because the degree of injury inflicted on an individual in depriving him of life, is extreme and irreparable ; whereas, depriving him of any portion of his property, is not so extreme or irreparable an injury. But while thus compared to another commandment, the latter prohibition, "Thou shalt not steal," appears of less importance ; yet in itself, and abstractedly considered, it is of the very highest importance, because it is the commandment of the living God, disobedience to which endangers our immortal soul ; and as every one of the precepts of the law springs from the same source, and has been enacted by the same Divine authority, the same principle is applicable to them all, namely, that in disobeying we sin against the great Legislator, and endanger our eternal happiness. Therefore, every commandment is in itself of the highest importance ; and it is only when we are reduced to the

forced alternative of giving the preference to one commandment before another, that we can at all speak of them as greater or less, as weighty or slight. Therefore our teacher tells us, "Run and be diligent in thy obedience to any one of the Divine commandments, although, in comparison with other precepts of the law, it should appear as the most trivial ; for in itself, and abstractedly from any comparison, the fact, that it is a Divine commandment, stamps it at once with the highest importance, as thou canst not transgress it without sinning against the Creator, before whose judgment-seat thou art hereafter to appear."

Flee from the commission of a sin— True heroism, which consists in subduing our passions, does not require that we should expose ourselves to temptation, or brave the danger of committing a sin. On the contrary, we evince the most complete mastery of our passions, when we fly from temptation, when we avoid the opportunity of doing wrong, and shun such associations as may exercise a baneful influence over us ; and the more frequently we have already withstood and conquered temptation, the more perfectly we appear to have subjected all our passions and desires unto the law of God, the greater is the heroism which we evince in mistrusting ourselves, and dreading our own weakness ; for vanity and pride are the most powerful, the most deeply-rooted, and firmly-seated, of our failings. They survive even after the well-disciplined mind has eradicated every other imperfection ; nay, the very victories which we achieve over our evil desires, lend strength to our vanity, and raise us in our own estimation. How many a virtuous but weak man has been seduced from the narrow path of duty, by the suggestions of vanity, which, recalling to his memory the arduous contests in which he had been engaged with his rebellious passions, enhances the value and importance of his successes, and whispers to him, "A man like thee ought not to fear temptation ; thou who hast so completely obtained the mastery over thyself, what needest thou apprehend ? Surely the danger

is not so great as any of those to which thou hast been exposed, and over which thou hast triumphed. Let the coward, the novice, the unprincipled waverer, seek safety in flight, and shrink from encountering the temptation which they ought to meet and overcome; it behoves not thee to follow their timorous example. 'The world expects from thee and the like of thee, that ye should lead, not follow; that your glorious victories should strengthen others in their struggles, but not that ye should shun the contest because ye fear to succumb. Then go on and prosper; add one more to the glorious conquests thou hast already achieved, and convince the world that no temptation, however great, can shake thy firmness.' It is against this inward seducer that our teacher cautions us. "Listen not," he says, "to the promptings of pride, or to the suggestions of vanity. Think not, because ninety-nine times thou hast succeeded in gaining the ascendancy over thy passions, and *overcoming temptation, that, therefore, thou must also succeed the hundredth time. No; mistrust thine own strength; be assured that thy evil propensities, though tamed, are not eradicated; witness the silly vanity, the ill-timed pride, which would urge thee on to expose thyself to a temptation which may prove too strong for thee. No; flee from the commission of sin, and thus resist the first temptation, that of at all entering on the contest."

For the performance of one precept, &c.—There is a retributive justice which presides over the moral world, and which ordains that one deed should engender another; and that every action should not only form a link in the great chain of events which forms our life, but that every succeeding link must spring from, or be connected with, that which precedes it. This is occasioned not by any interference with, or control exercised over, man's mind, nor yet by any constraint imposed on his freedom of choice or volition; but is the result of habit, which gradually seizes on the faculties of the mind, and propels us onward in the direc-

tion which we have once taken; and so strong is the dominion which habit in time acquires over us, that it becomes more easy for us to take one hundred steps forward on the road to which we are accustomed, than to retrace one single step, or at all to diverge from that road. Truly does the profound examiner of the soul and its faculties, Maimonides, observe, "Know, that neither moral perfections nor defects can be acquired or implanted in the soul, except by means of frequent repetition and continued practice for a length of time, until they become habitual. When repetitions and practice are confined to good or moral actions, the habitude which we acquire is virtuous; if the contrary, it is vicious; and, in either case, it is most difficult to root out the habit which has been formed."

It is to this habit, which forms itself insensibly, and takes so firm a hold on the soul that the most strenuous efforts do not always succeed in dislodging it, that our teacher alludes, when he says, that "the performance of one precept leads to another, and the commission of one crime involves another." There is a certain inward satisfaction of the soul's nobler faculties, which attends the performance of our duties, and which surpasses every enjoyment the world can offer. When once we have tasted this inward satisfaction, we desire to repeat the enjoyment; we therefore seek the opportunity of again acting in accordance with the duties prescribed by the Divine law. The enjoyment is repeated; and as it never clogs, but is continually imparting a greater zest, we persevere in our efforts to obtain that surpassing bliss, until obedience to the will of God becomes so habitual to us, that what first appeared difficult becomes quite easy, and what formerly required our most painful exertions we now accomplish with perfect ease to ourselves. On the contrary, there is a certain lassitude seizes on the nobler faculties of the soul when we deviate from the commandments of the Lord, which, unless dissipated by the powerful efforts of the monitor within us, (conscience,) goes on contin-

ually increasing; so that these nobler faculties grow less and less able to resist the impulse of the passions; and as at every repeated sin this lassitude becomes greater, it eventually prostrates the soul altogether under the dominion of desire and vice, until disobedience to the will of God becomes so habitual, that crimes which first appeared most hideous become perfectly familiar, and deeds, the performance of which formerly required the most forcible exertions to stifle the voice of conscience, and to bind down its struggles, are now accomplished with perfect ease: Accordingly, as every new performance of his duties strengthens the virtuous man in his resolves, and smooths the path before him, so likewise every fresh crime perpetrated by the wicked hardens him in his obduracy, and heightens the barrier which impedes his return.

As the reward of obeying one precept, &c.—This fact, that one good deed leads on to another, and that the commission of one crime involves another, is not the result of accident, but is owing to that retributive justice which, as we said before, presides over the moral world. Man is not planted on earth without a purpose; he is not gifted with an im-

mortal soul and uncontrolled freedom, in vain. There is a tribunal, before which he is hereafter to be accountable for the use he has made of that freedom. Everlasting bliss or unhappiness becomes the portion of his immortal soul, according to the unerring sentence of that tribunal. But it is not in another state of existence only that its sentence is enforced; even in this world the reward of the virtuous is granted in the satisfaction which, as we have already described, results from the performance of a good deed, and which, urging him on to persevere, renders obedience habitual to him, and thus qualifies him for future bliss. While the retribution exacted from the wicked consists in that lassitude, which, as we have likewise described, attends the commission of a sin, and which, subjecting him to his evil passions, renders disobedience habitual to him, and thus ripens him for that sentence which hereafter awaits him.

Thus we see that the precepts of our teacher form one connected maxim, which tells us, not only what we are to do, but also why we are to do so, and the inevitable consequence of our actions in this world, and in that to come.

(To be continued.)

II. METAPHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE RABBIES.

Sepher Ikkarim: "BOOK OF PRINCIPLES:" BY R. JOSEPH ALBO.

(Continued from page 377.)

CHAPTER XXV.

PENITENCE, extorted by the fear and pains of present suffering, such as that of Pharaoh, or that of Sihon, is utterly unavailing: For, as we have already fully developed, it is not the spontaneous offspring of their own free-will, which, as soon as it becomes liberated from the constraint which terror exercised over its decisions, relapses into its former course. There is, however, another species of repentance, occasioned by fear of a very different description from the above. It is

not occasioned by a paroxysm of terror, which paralyses man's volition, and which, as soon as it subsides, has lost its influence, and leaves no trace of real amendment behind: But it is the result of man's uncontrolled choice and free-will, which induces him, although the hand of affliction does not weigh heavily upon him, and no immediate punishment terrifies his soul, to reflect on the greatness and power of his Creator, whose justice and providence govern the universe. He becomes impressed with the conviction, that, whatever betides

man, of weal or of woe, here or hereafter, springs from the cognizance Divine Providence takes of men, and of their actions; and, therefore, he fears and stands in awe of the Lord, whom he dreads to offend by transgressing His commandments; for, knowing that he, like every other mortal being, has sinned,—as Holy Writ emphatically declares, “There is no man on the face of the earth who never sinneth,” (2 Chronicles vi. 36,)—he repents of his misdeeds, and firmly determines, to the utmost of his abilities, to avoid committing any sin, or to transgress the behests of that omniscient Judge, before whom he is hereafter to be accountable. This is the true repentance from fear, which is available, acceptable to the Deity, and of which R. Simon ben Lakish spoke, when he said, “Great is the merit of penitence; for the penitent’s premeditated sins are accounted to him as committed inadvertently.” *

It behoves us, however, in order properly to understand this saying of R. Simon ben Lakish; and also that one, in which he declares, that “great is the merit of repentance; for the penitent’s wilful sins are accounted to him as meritorious actions;” §—in order properly to understand these sayings, it behoves us to examine the difference between penitence which springs from fear, and that which has its origin in love: For reason dictates, that if repentance be availing, it can only be so to the extent of superseding and blotting out the sins of which man repents, but is not sufficient to ensure to him the life to come; inasmuch, as having performed no positive good deeds, and his repentance having only the merit of negative virtue, he has nothing to recommend him to the Divine beneficence; and, such being the case, it can make no essential difference, whether his repentance springs from fear or love, as in either case it can only claim the merit of negative virtue.

In order to afford the necessary explanation which the subject re-

quires, we say, that, according to strict justice, no penitence can possibly expiate sin; (as we have already stated at the commencement of this chapter;) but the Divine mercy and free grace permits sincere contrition to become availing unto man: Nor are we to be surprised, that the infinite mercy of the Deity has left this path open to frail and sinful man. This explanation was given by the prophet to the men of his generation, who said to him, “How is it possible that repentance can obtain for man the bliss of a future state, as the utmost it can effect is, to blot out the past transgressions of the sinner? But, as he thus remains naked, and alike destitute of positive merits or demerits, what claim can he have on the Divine beneficence?” To this the prophet, in the name of the Deity, replies, “I will heal their backslidings: I will love them freely.” (Hosea xiv. 4.) It is true, that if justice were to be rigorously enforced against sinful man, no repentance could expiate past transgressions: But “I will heal their backslidings:”—I will permit their sincere contrition to blot out their misdeeds, and heal those bruises which, as it were, sin has inflicted on their souls. Nay, I will do more: If their penitence springs from a feeling of love to me, which, independent of any selfish admixture of hope or fear, of expected reward or dreaded punishment, induces them to mourn because they feel that I cannot be pleased at their sins;—if such is the source and origin of their repentance, “I will love them freely;”—my mercy and love shall be as freely exercised towards them, as their penitence was freely and purely excited towards me. In this sense David, when repenting of the sin he had committed with Bath-sheba, said, “Uphold me with thy free Spirit.” (Psalm li. 12.) Not on account of any merit that I can plead, or of any claim that I can advance, but from thine own free and undeserved Spirit of mercy uphold me. This free gift of mercy is bestowed by the Deity on man, in a measure corresponding to the degree of love man entertains towards the Deity; a fact which is,

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., page 375.
§ Ibid.

on more than one occasion, declared by the inspired psalmist: Thus he says, "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." (Psalm xxxvii. 4.) Again: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Psalm ii. 8.) "Open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it." (Psalm lxxxi. 10.) In all these quotations we see, that the gift is made dependent on the request. Thence it results, that as he who repents from fear does so because he dreads the punishment he has incurred by sinning and offending the Lord, and all that he hopes and prays to attain by his repentance is, that his sins may be forgiven and not punished, the Deity grants him the full extent of his prayers, by accounting to him the premeditated transgressions of which he has been guilty, as offences committed inadvertently, and which, as such, do not subject the offender to punishment. But he whose repentance springs from love of the Lord, whose contrition is occasioned, not by the dread of punishment,—for his mind is firmly bent and determined to endure whatever infliction the Deity may visit him with, in perfect resignation to the Divine will,—but from grief at having offended or given displeasure to the Lord, and because he wishes to do that which is acceptable and pleasing to Him he loves, for no other reason, and without any other motive, than that he loves Him; and without any admixture whatsoever of selfish feelings or expectations;—he, whose repentance springs from this most pure source, has attained that perfection of purpose which the law is intended to confer; namely, pure love of the Lord; and therefore in conformity with the promise of Holy Writ,—“I love them that love me,” (Proverbs viii. 17,)—the Divine love is freely bestowed on him; which is not the case with him whose repentance springs from the dread of punishment, and who, actuated by a selfish motive, does not deserve to rank alike with him who is animated by the pure principle of perfect love. But, although in the

first instance repentance may have been inspired by the dread of punishment, the Deity has vouchsafed to promise the penitent, that, if he perseveres in a contrite course, and strives to do that which is acceptable, avoiding that which is displeasing to the Lord, he will eventually attain that purer frame of mind which springs from love, and obliterates fear; therefore, the chapter of Deuteronomy which treats of penitence, commences with the words, “And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee; and thou shalt reflect in thine own heart among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice,” &c.; (Deut. xxx. 1, 2;) to denote, that although the commencement of repentance be occasioned by fear of punishment, or even by the pains of present affliction; yet, by persevering in thy course of penitence, avoiding every act of wilful disobedience, and seeking that in all things thy conduct may be in accordance with the Divine laws, “the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the hearts of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul,” &c.; (Deut. xxx. 6;) so that eventually thy repentance will assume that pure and elevated character, which renders thee worthy of the free mercy and love of thy God.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE course of repentance, by means of which man is to become cleansed from his iniquities, and appear purified from his sins before his Lord, requires that thought, word, and deed, should be in unanimous and perfect accordance. In his thoughts he must feel contrition for, and grief at, his transgression; with his words he must confess his misdeeds and wickedness, and by his actions he must evince the firm purpose to abstain from his former errors, and, indeed, as much as possibly he can, to avoid offending against the Divine law; but, on the contrary, conform to its precepts to the utmost of his power.

That contrition and inward grief are indispensable to true repentance, is proved by the prophet, when, reproaching the Israelites for their impenitence and hardened conduct, he says, "No man repented him of his wickedness, saying within himself, What have I done?" (Jeremiah viii. 6.) That the confession and acknowledgment of his misdeeds form an essential part of a man's repentance, we find expressly declared in Holy Writ, where it is said, "He shall confess that in which he hath sinned;" (Leviticus v. 5;) and again, "And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me;" (Leviticus xxvi. 40;) and again, "Then they shall confess their sin which they have done;" (Numbers v. 7;) which prove that the confession of sins, as an integral part of repentance, is directly commanded.

That in his deeds the penitent is to abstain from the repetition of his former offences, we are taught by the prophet, when he says, "We will not say any more to the work of our hands, 'Ye are our Gods.'" (Hosea xiv. 8.) Again: "He proclaimeth peace to his people, and to his righteous ones, and they shall not return any more to error." (Psalm lxxxv. 8.) Thus these three great ingredients, and component parts, of repentance are plainly pointed out to us in Holy Writ.

The obstacles and impediments which stand in the way of true repentance, are likewise threefold: namely, 1. Insensibility to the nature and consequences of sin. 2. The seeking, by subterfuge, to extenuate our sins, and to exculpate or excuse ourselves at the cost of another. 3. The love of money, and of fame. Each of these three causes is effectual to prevent the mind from becoming penitent: For it is evident, that he who is insensible to the heinous nature and fearful effects of sin cannot consider himself in need of repentance, but is in the same situation with a man who nourishes within him a deadly illness, but of the existence of which he is not aware, as he does not yet feel its effects; and who, therefore, derides

the idea of taking medicine to counteract a disorder, to the ravages of which he, as yet, is insensible. Thus, likewise, the sinner, ere he becomes awakened to a sense of his sinful state, will never turn to repentance. Therefore, the Deity, reproaching Israel with their impenitence, and utter insensibility to sin, says, through the prophet, "I will go and return to my place, until they יאשמו acknowledge their offence, and seek my face." (Hosea v. 15.) Until they discover and acknowledge their offence, they will not seek my face, or become truly penitent. Therefore, David, when confessing his heartfelt contrition and repentance, exclaims, "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." (Psalm li. 3.) "I am not incapable of repentance from being insensible to the nature of my offence, and its fearful consequences; on the contrary, my sin, in all its naked and hideous deformity, is ever before me, and present to mine eyes." And in order to rouse the sinner from this apathetic state, the Deity commands the prophet, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." (Isaiah lviii. 1.) These quotations prove how great an impediment is placed in the way of true repentance, by insensibility to the nature and effects of sin.

But the attempt to extenuate our sins by subterfuge, or to exculpate ourselves at the cost of another, is an obstacle equally strong, to prevent repentance from arising in the mind of the sinner: For, as long as man deceives himself into the belief, that any excuse he can allege will justify, or, at least, palliate, his sins, he will not have recourse to sincere, and, therefore painful, repentance. He who attempts thus to extenuate his misdeeds is, in the Sacred Scriptures, called, מַכְסֵּה פְשָׁעִים, "a concealer of his sins;" and of him the wise Monarch saith, "He who concealeth his sins shall not prosper." (Proverbs xxviii. 13.) And Job likewise says, "If I concealed my transgressions as Adam," &c; (Job xxxi. 33;) because Adam, when taxed with having transgressed the command of

the Deity, sought to exculpate himself at the expense of another, by saying, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (Genesis iii. 12.) But this attempted exculpation did not succeed; and man cannot make his peace with his Creator by trying to shift the responsibility he incurs through his own evil actions, on the shoulders of any other being whatsoever. For, along with his volition, or freedom of choice, man is gifted with reason, in order that he may know how to make the best use of his freedom, and that he may always observe his own conduct, and avoid sin. For this reason, he who transgresses inadvertently is still called a sinner, and needs expiation: And, as man is thus provided with an inward monitor, he must not suffer himself to be misled or seduced by any being whatsoever: Accordingly, the Divine reproof to Adam was, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it," &c. (Genesis iii. 17.) We do not any where read that Adam was prohibited from listening to the voice, or adopting the counsels of his wife; but the reproof was, "Because thou hast suffered thy passions, and corporeal frailties, to get the better of thy reason, the monitor I had bestowed on thee; because thou hast permitted the voice of seduction to lead thee from thy purpose, and art thereby become disobedient to my command; therefore, accursed is the earth for thy sake," &c.: It forms no extenuation to thy offence, that thou wert seduced; it does not lessen thy responsibility, that thou didst permit the suggestion of a beloved mortal to outweigh the positive command of thy God. This proves that no excuse or subterfuge can screen man from the responsibility he incurs through sin; and at the same time shows us how this attempted palliation impedes the rise and progress of real repentance.

But the love of money, and of fame, likewise forms a powerful impediment to repentance; for, in order that contrition be sincere and re-

pentance acceptable, there must be only one species of love predominant in the mind, namely, the love of the Lord. And the purity of this love is such, that it cannot submit to be defiled by coming in contact with the impure love of terrestrial objects, or dividing with it the heart in which it is seated. And therefore, David, in pouring fourth his contrite supplications to the Deity, expresses his hope that his repentance may be acceptable, as not one of these three obstacles formed any impediment to its sincerity. Thus he says, "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not concealed. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Psalm xxxii. 5.) He says, "I acknowledge my sin," to show that he is not insensible to the nature and effects of vice, but is fully alive to its hideous deformity. He says, "And mine iniquity have I not concealed," to show that he does not attempt, by subterfuge, to extenuate his wickedness, or to exculpate himself at the cost of another; but that, on the contrary, he is fully alive to the responsibility he has incurred. And, lastly, he says, "I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin," to show that the great cause of his repentance was grief at his transgressions unto the Lord; that neither love of money or of fame, nor any selfish or impure sentiment possessed his soul; but that his contrition was the offspring of his love to his God, and therefore "Thou forgavest," &c. Spontaneous as was my repentance, dictated by no fear of punishment, since I am resigned to whatever thou dost decree; arising from no worldly or impure motives; since every sentiment but love to thee is discarded from my mind; it was met by that free mercy with which thou didst graciously forgive my iniquity.

Thus the example of David, while, on the one hand, it teaches, that repentance, to be acceptable, requires perfect harmony of thought, word, and deed, does, on the other hand, likewise point out to us the obstacles

which impede the rise and progress of true repentance, in order that we may avoid or overcome these obstacles.

(*To be continued.*)

III. CONSECRATION OF THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE, DUKE'S PLACE, ON FRIDAY, THE 24TH ELUL, (18TH SEPTEMBER,) 5595.

"The heavens are my throne, and the earth my footstool, where is the house that ye build for me?" (Isaiah lxvi. 1.)

THE profound and philosophical Montesquieu remarks, "All civilized nations dwell in houses: Thence the idea naturally arose in the minds of men to build a house for God, in which they can adore Him, and seek Him, both in their fears and in their hopes. Nothing, indeed, can be more consoling to the hearts of men, than to assemble in one place, where they all, with one accord, give utterance to those supplications which their wants, and a sense of their weakness, dictate."*

This observation is subjected to the correction of an anonymous commentator, a Divine, who says, "It would be more true, and also more becoming, to state that the necessity of instructing mankind, of recalling them to a sense of their duties and obligations, and of preaching to them the doctrines of their creed, first gave rise to the idea of building a house for God." §

Here we have the opinions of a philosopher and of a divine, respecting the cause which has led mankind to build a house for God. We do not intend to examine the merits of either of these opinions. They may be satisfactory to philosophers, or appear conclusive to the teachers of the nations of the earth. But we are Jews; to our guardianship the revealed will of God has been confided: And the book which contains that will is our guide and instructor; to which we can apply on every subject connected with the moral world, in full confidence that there we find the best, because most authentic, information.

Accordingly, when we examine the pages of Sacred Scripture, respecting the cause which led to the erection of a house to God by our ancestors, we read the positive com-

mand of the Deity, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." (Exodus xxv. 8.)

This, as far as the Israelites are concerned, sets the question at rest, and disposes at once of the opinions pronounced by the philosopher and the divine. It was not because the Israelites themselves dwelt in tabernacles, nor yet because they stood in need of instruction respecting their duties and obligations, that "a sanctuary" was erected and consecrated unto the Lord: It was at His express command, and because He vouchsafed to declare His gracious intention that "He would dwell among them." It was an especial mark of favour which He vouchsafed unto that people, whom He designed to be "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation," when He let a visible sign of His glorious presence rest on the sanctuary which He bade them erect. It is true, He is omnipresent; it is true, His glory fills the universe, and that His will and His creative power are attested as well by the resplendent luminary which sheds light and life over the earth, as by the grain of sand that is driven before the wind; and that every object in creation declares His being. But while these signs of His presence are granted to all, and bestowed alike on the whole human race, the nation whom He had chosen as peculiar unto himself, were far more highly gifted. Theirs was the only temple which His שכינה *Shekinah* deigned to glorify: Theirs the only altar on which fire from heaven consumed the sacrifice. To them the temple of the Lord was not only the place in which they were to receive instruction in the tenets of their faith, but a standing miracle rendered that temple itself their great instructor, and an incontrovertible evidence of the truth of their religion and its history.

* Del'Esprit des Loix, lib. xxv. cap. 3. § Ibid.

When the Israelites proved unworthy of being sanctified by the immediate presence of the Lord, when the *שכינה* departed, and did not return; and, subsequently, when Jerusalem's lofty temple was laid low, and the plough turned up the ground on which the most holy sanctuary had stood; when the Israelites were driven forth, and scattered over the habitable earth, stripped of every thing but their faith and the laws of their God; when recollections of the past awakened those hopes of the future which, founded on the justice and mercy of God, they know, cannot fail; then his synagogue became to the Jew what heretofore the temple had been. It is the spot where he is permitted to present himself before the Ruler of the universe, who has vouchsafed to declare, that "in every place where I record my name, there will I come unto thee, and bless thee;" where

he is to join in the prayers of the faithful, and mix his voice with the invocations of his brethren. Since Jerusalem is destroyed, and the mountain of the Lord lies desolate, the most sacred spot on earth to him is his synagogue. When he enters its portals the feeling that takes possession of his soul is that of awe and veneration for that invisible Sovereign, whose presence he is permitted to approach. While performing his devotions, he is penetrated with humility, and bows in resignation to that just doom which has exiled him and his fathers from that sanctuary, which had been the glory of his nation. His stay in the synagogue is marked by that decorum which becomes him who stands in the presence of Omnipotence. No idle talk, no mundane ideas interrupt and disturb the train of thought, by which he strives to elevate his soul unto con-

PARAPHRASED.

OUR Lord, our God, with ardent love,*
 Still to his people bound,
 Bade them uprear a glorious house;
 There let his praise resound:
 That all the world may own with one accord,
 How nobly Israel glorifies the Lord.

CHORUS.

Goodly and blest is Jacob's dwelling,
 His 'Tents all other 'Tents excelling.

Thy presence every where pervades,
 And yet no where is found,
 Thou dost not dwell in any place,
 Yet liv'st in all around.
 But Israel's is the land thou lov'st the best,
 And Zion is thy chosen place of rest.

* This is the translation given in the English part of "THE ORDER OF SERVICE," published on the occasion.

templation of the Deity. He knows and feels, that the place is sacred to the Lord, and that it is his duty not to offend its sanctity by frivolous conduct, or worldly meditations. And when he quits the hallowed spot, from whence his supplications have ascended to his God, sentiments of gratitude, love, and veneration pervade his soul, accompany him to his dwelling, and regulate his actions.

Such is, or ought to be, the influence which the מקדש מעט, "miniature temple," as the synagogue is justly called, should exercise over the mind of the Israelite. Let him but (when there) imbue his mind with the feeling proper to the place, and the impression will be lasting; his conduct will become such, as to find grace, and good understanding, in the eyes of God, and of man; (Prov. iii. 4 :) and the respect which the nations, among whom he dwells, will entertain for his worship, and for him-

self, will keep pace with the devoutness that possesses his own mind, during that worship: So that, provided the Jew duly honours his synagogue, and squares his conduct accordingly, that place of worship may, in some degree, become what heretofore the most holy temple was declared to be,—“a sanctuary of the Lord.”

We are induced to offer these remarks, from having been present at the consecration of the great synagogue, in Duke's Place, which had been closed for several months, and undergone a thorough repair. The ceremonies were solemn, and adapted to the occasion. We submit the hymn which closed the service, to our readers, not only on account of its dignified beauty, but also because it most truly expresses the feelings and aspirations of the Israelite, on so solemn an occasion; and to which the best translation cannot do adequate justice.

יִמְרֵהוּן הַשִּׁיר הַזֶּה כִּי־אֵד אִמְרוּ הַנָּאן וְלֹא

יִי אֱלֹהֵי דְבִקְתָּ בְעַמְּךָ •

בְּאַהֲבָה נִפְלְאַה :

וְצוֹיֹתֶם לְבָנוֹת בֵּית לִשְׁמֶךָ •

וּכְבוֹדְךָ עֲלֵיהֶם יִרְאֶה :

וְכָל אִישׁ מִשְׁתַּאֲה • לְדַעַת מַה יַּעֲשֶׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל :

לִיה

מַה־טָּבוּ אֲחֻלֶּיךָ יַעֲקֹב

מִשְׁכַּנְתֶּיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל :

הַשָּׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ אֶתָּה מָלֵא •

וְאַיֶּזָה מְקוֹם מְנוּחָתְךָ :

נִגְלִיתָ לְכָל וּמַעֲיִן כָּל תִּפְלֵא

אַיֶּה מְקוֹם כְּבוֹד שְׁכִינָתְךָ :

לְצִיּוֹן אֲמַרְתָּ כִּי שָׁם בֵּיתְךָ • וְאַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ יוֹשֵׁב תְּהִלּוֹת

יִשְׂרָאֵל :

CHORUS.

Goodly and blest is Jacob's dwelling,
His Tents all other Tents excelling.

What, though when pomp and pride prevail'd,
The Lord forsook the land ;
Yet will he hear my suppliant voice,
Whilst humbly here I stand.
Still will I love and praise one gracious Lord,
And bid all Israel glorify their God.

CHORUS.

Goodly and blest is Jacob's dwelling,
His Tents all other Tents excelling.

I have not lost my cherish'd hope,
That glorious day to see ;
When, owning my Redeemer's power,
The world, with bended knee,
Shall view our strength revived, our land restored,
The grand fulfilment of thy mighty word.

CHORUS.

Goodly and blest is Jacob's dwelling,
His Tents all other Tents excelling.

Hear me, O Lord ! for thine own sake,
Let thy great power be known,
No longer pause—let all behold
That thou art God alone.
As darkness flies before the morning light,
Thy mighty presence shall make all things bright.

CHORUS.

Goodly and blest is Jacob's dwelling,
His Tents all other Tents excelling.

לִיה
מִח־טָבוֹ אֶחָלִיד וַעֲקֹב
מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיהָ יִשְׂרָאֵל :

וַיִּשְׁמֹן יִשְׂרָוֹן וַיִּבְעֹט
אִז רַחֲקָתָ מֵעַל גְּבוּלִי :
וְאַתִּינִצֵּבָה לִפְנֵי בְּמִקְדָּשׁ מִעֹט •
וַיִּשְׁמַע מִהִיכְלוֹ קוֹלִי :
אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי לִי • בְּבִדּוּהוּ וְגִירוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ כָּל זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל :

לִיה
מִח־טָבוֹ אֶחָלִיד וַעֲקֹב
מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיהָ יִשְׂרָאֵל :

הֵן תִּחַלְתִּי וְנִצַּחֲתִי לֹא אֶבְדָּ •
עוֹד אָבוֹא אֶל מִקְדָּשִׁי אֵל
עַל פְּנֵי כָּל־הָעַמִּים אֶקְבֹּד •
וְכֹא לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹאֵל
לְהוֹשִׁיב אֶרֶץ גְּשֻׁמָּה וְחַפּוּץ יְיָ וְיוֹאֵל • וַיַּחַן שֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל :

לִיה
מִח־טָבוֹ אֶחָלִיד וַעֲקֹב
מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיהָ יִשְׂרָאֵל :

אֲדַנִּי הִקְשִׁיבָה וְהִגִּלָּה בְּכִבּוּדָּהּ •
לְמַעַנָּה אֵל תֵּאָחֵר •
וַיִּוֹדַע כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהִים לְבָדָּהּ •
וּמִבְלָעָדֶיהָ אִין עוֹד אֵחֵר :
אִז יִבְקַע אוֹרוֹ בְּנִשְׁחָר • כָּעֵת יֹאמַר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל :

לִיה
מִח־טָבוֹ אֶחָלִיד וַעֲקֹב
מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיהָ יִשְׂרָאֵל :

IV. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 384.)

WE have already related that the first Hebrew translation of the book *Moreh Hannebochim* was undertaken at Marseilles; and that the second and more generally received translation had its origin in the request of the principal Rabbies of Provence, who, unacquainted with the Arabic language, were still desirous to improve by the wisdom and rare talents of Maimonides. But though these facts might induce us to suppose, that the south of France was the principal seat of the *Rambam's* friends and admirers, that country was the spot from whence arose the hostile attacks on the great author, which involved the whole of Jewish Spain, France, and Egypt, in one great feud, and which only subsided through the determination and justice of some great men, worthy of being the champions of Maimonides.

That the Jews of France should take the lead in the attacks that were made on Maimonides, is perfectly natural. We have already described the principles of the French school as directly opposed to the Spanish, to which it formed the most striking contrast, and that the tacit acceptance of the Talmud, with all its multifarious contexts and voluminous commentaries, was at once the fundamental principle and the distinguishing characteristic of the French school. The Provençal Rabbies received the philosophical works of Maimonides, before they had become acquainted with or had examined into his Talmudic labours. His philosophical views were bold, new, and independent: Having evinced his respect for the Talmud and oral law in the *Jad Hachazakah*, he was guided solely by his own reflections in the *Moreh*. But of the former circumstance, the Provençal Rabbies were ignorant; the latter alarmed them. Their zeal for the Talmud led them to condemn every attempt to strike out a new and independent path, and urged them to use every possible means to prevent the spread of opinions, which they looked

upon as dangerous to the existence and supremacy of the great compilation, by which they held fast as the sheet-anchor of their national existence. The letter of Maimonides to his son (which we have quoted)* shows that, even amongst the enlightened Jews of Spain, many a zealot was found, who took unbrage at the freedom with which the great *Rambam* expressed his opinions. But another letter of his to his son proves, that it was from France he expected the most violent opposition. For too well he knew the attachment of the French school to the Talmud, not to anticipate the outcry that there would be raised against him and his work: Accordingly he says, "I request thee to be diligent in studying the works of Aben-Ezra, of whose views and hints I have made very frequent use, both in the *Jad Hachazakah* and in the *Moreh Hannebochim*. But avoid, by all means, the writings of the French Rabbies, who fancy they know the Lord when they feast on their joints of roasted beef, and ragouts seasoned with vinegar, and refresh their spirits with the fumes of garlic. Then, filled with earthly enjoyments, they proceed to their synagogues, offer their prayers with a loud voice, read the Talmud, and pervert the true meaning of the Sacred Scriptures. When they have done this, and expended a few *dirrehms* (pence) in donations to the poor, they think they have worthily acquitted themselves of all their duties: Such is not the way in which God ought to be worshipped. Therefore abstain, as much as possible, from having any intercourse with them; but rather commune with our brethren in Spain, for they are well-intentioned, men of sense and of merit," &c. §

In expressing this contemptuous opinion of the French Rabbies, there can be no doubt but that Maimoni-

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II. page 382.

§ Epist. Maimonid. III.

des was carried away by his personal feelings; and, particularly, by the wish to prejudice his son, and the world generally, against any thing that might be asserted by these Rabbies in condemnation of himself and of his work. However, he did not only go too far, as there can be no doubt but that many of the French Rabbies were as honest in their zeal, and as well intentioned in their opinions and writings, as he could possibly be in his own; but his indiscriminate and sweeping censure defeated its own object, and only served to show the world, that the great R. Moses bar Maimon, with all his splendid and unequalled talents, was still but a man, and, as such, liable to err, and to become unjust, as well as the meanest of those adversaries whom he so rigorously condemns.

As soon as the *Moreh Hannebochim* was translated, and generally read, it occasioned the greatest sensation. Opinions became divided: Some warmly approved, whilst others still more warmly condemned. The zealots of the French school were only waiting for a leader of sufficient weight and influence, in order solemnly and publicly to condemn the works which caused such great agitation and dispute. This leader they found in the person of R. Salomon, chief of the community at Montpellier, who, assisted by two of his disciples, caused the book, *Moreh Hannebochim*, to be publicly burnt, and excommunicated all those who should read the works of Maimonides, or the writings of Greek and Arab philosophers.

Maimonides, as we have already related, had closed his mortal career ere this bursting of the storm, which he anticipated, could be communicated to him: But the great man had many friends, many adherents, many admiring pupils, who would not tamely endure so gross an outrage to be offered to the manes of their beloved teacher. The insult, conveyed by the public burning of of his book, and the excommunication pronounced against its readers, became the signal for general war. Each party tried to strengthen

itself, by gaining adherents and partizans in every direction. The chief Rabbi of Toledo, R. Judah ben Joseph Al-phachar, made common cause with R. Salomon, of Montpellier; while the most celebrated schools in Spain, which had arisen since the dispersion of the great school at Lucena, warmly espoused the defence of Maimonides. Thus, at Narbonne, where, at that time, many of the greatest Rabbies of the age had taken up their residence, and taught; at Gerona, where R. Moses bar Nachman; (*Ramban* or *Nachmanides*;) and at Saragossa, where R. Bechai ben Moses flourished; the intemperate zeal of the French Rabbies was loudly and strongly condemned. Many congregations of Provence joined in this condemnation. But the stern fanaticism of R. Salomon was not to be overcome; and, after a long and angry correspondence, he went so far, relying on the support of his partizans in Castile, and the north of France, as to excommunicate all those congregations of Provence, Arragon, Navarre, and Catalonia, which persisted in defending the cause of Maimonides.

This forcible interruption of the friendly relations, which, till then, had subsisted among the Jews, continued for several years, (from 1220 till 1232,) during which the zeal of both parties became more fierce; and the spirit of irritation and hatred acquired daily greater strength. While mutual animosity was thus reaching the highest pitch of exasperation, R. David ben Joseph Kimchi stepped forward, and undertook the praiseworthy task of attempting to reconcile the contending parties, and to restore that harmony which formerly had subsisted among the Jewish congregations. This learned Rabbi was a native of Narbonne, and already far advanced in age, at the time of which we speak (1230). His father was greatly distinguished for his learning, but was far surpassed by his two sons, R. David and R. Moses. Of these, the former (R. David) is celebrated as the prince of Hebrew grammarians, and merits fame beyond any of his

predecessors. In addition to his valuable grammatical works, he has likewise written a Commentary on the Prophets and Psalms, which is the more valuable as he chiefly confines himself to a literal interpretation of the words of Holy Writ. His fame was fully established forty years before he adopted the resolution of offering himself as umpire to the two contending parties. Combining the study of philosophy with that of Hebrew grammar, and conversant beyond any one of his contemporaries with the spirit of the sacred language, he could not avoid siding with the defenders of Maimonides; although he did not come forward as a champion, or defender, of that great author; but, on the contrary, professed the strictest impartiality, and declared the whole dispute as idle and contrary to common sense. But he felt hurt that Rabbies, who were altogether unacquainted with philosophy, should attempt, by downright force, to control public opinion, and that they should have succeeded in enlisting the talented and enlightened R. Judah ben Joseph Al-phachar under their banners. The protracted dissensions had fatigued the minds of all those who were not immediately concerned. The rigorous measure, adopted by the zealots, of excommunicating entire congregations, disturbed the ties of consanguinity, and the ordinary relations of life. An umpire was therefore sincerely desired, and the efforts of R. David were hailed with general acclamation: He negotiated for some time, and not unsuccessfully, with the French Rabbies. Several of those who at first had made common cause with R. Salomon, of Montpellier, were become desirous of an amicable arrangement, and entrusted R. David Kimchi with full powers for the purpose.

His intention was to visit R. Judah Al-phachar, in order to treat with him in person; but illness overtook R. David on the road: His advanced age, he being then upwards of seventy years old, could

but ill^{ter} support the fatigues attending a journey across the Pyrenees, and when he arrived at Gerona, he was obliged to renounce the idea of proceeding further. He therefore wrote to R. Judah, stating the [purport of his intended visit, transmitting copies of the full powers with which he was furnished, and calling upon R. Judah to use his influence in putting an end to the lamentable divisions, which, during so many years, had set the wise men of Israel in array against each other.

This epistle, which, in its style, is calm, dignified, and altogether worthy of the character of umpire, which R. David Kimchi had assumed, did not meet with a corresponding reply from R. Judah Al-phachar: On the contrary, he is most violent in his censures, not only on R. David, but on all who uphold the *Moreh Hannebochim*; and expresses his own inflexible determination to adhere to the Rabbies of Montpellier, and not to recal the excommunication they had pronounced, until the book *Moreh* was altogether withdrawn from circulation.

He concludes with exhorting R. David to renounce the fellowship of innovators, and to give up the metaphysical speculations and dreams of philosophy, which, so long ago as the days of Abage and Rabah,* had by them been declared idle, vain, and unprofitable. And he advises him to follow the example of R. Salomon, of Montpellier, and his friends, who knew how to separate the corn from the chaff.

In reply to this violent epistle, R. David Kimchi, who, in the interim, had proceeded to Avila, vindicates his own orthodoxy and firm adherence to the faith of his fathers; but expresses his regret that R. Judah, whom he had always respected as a moderate and well-intentioned man, should make common cause with red-hot fanatics like R. Salomon and his friends.

* Two of the *Amoraim* or Talmudic doctors of the 4th series, according to the *Seder hadoroth*, lived about the year 350.

(To be continued.)

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VOL. II.

I. THE MISHNA.

מסכת אבות, *Mescheth Aboth*: "THE ETHICS OF THE FATHERS."

מ"ן לבן. COMMENTS BY NAPHTALI HIRTS WESSLEY.

(Continued from page 358.)

He * used to say, "Despise not any man, and do not spurn any thing: For there is a man who hath not his hour, neither is there a thing that hath not its place." (IV. 3.)

COMMENTARY. *Despise not any man*—The maxims which our teacher here lays down for our guidance, are intended to illustrate the saying of Ben Zoma, "Who is truly honourable? He who honoureth the creatures of his God;" and respecting which saying, we have already stated, that the *tanai* uses the word *ברייתא*, "creations," to inculcate on our mind the great and salutary truth, that whatever exists owes its being to the great First Cause, the Lord of the universe, and ought to be honoured, because it is His work. It is to develope and complete the instruction which this saying of Ben Zoma imparts to us, that our teacher now tells us, Do not think within thyself, that thou art bound to honour those only who are truly honourable; namely, the wise and pious who obey the will of God; but that thou art at liberty to despise the wicked fools who transgress his commandments. Such was not the intention of Ben Zoma when he taught thee who is truly honourable: He said *הברייתא*, "all the creations of thy God;" it therefore does not become thee to exclude any one. Let not thy vanity tempt thee to think that in despising the sinner thou doest no harm: Such is not the case; on the contrary, in despising

him thou thyself dost become guilty of sin: And accordingly the inspired sage tells us, "He who despiseth his neighbour is heartless; but a man of understanding holdeth his peace." (Proverbs xi. 12.) His meaning is, that whosoever despiseth his neighbour proves himself to be heartless, void of feeling and of reason.

We have already—in explaining the saying of R. Akebah, "Man is beloved, for he was created in the image of God"—stated, that this maxim of our teacher enables us properly to understand and practise the precept of the Divine law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself;" § and that the intention of the law is, that we should love every man, because all mankind are alike created in the image of God: And he on whose heart are impressed proper feelings of the high grace and prerogative bestowed on man, in being thus created in the image of his God, will beware how he slights or despises the possessor of this most glorious distinction: Therefore, the sage monarch properly said, "He who despiseth his neighbour is heartless," since the very fact that he contemns one who is his equal, who, like himself, is endowed with the distinguished grace of God, as a

* Ben Azai.

§ Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., page 147, *et seq.*

member of that species which ranks highest of all terrestrial creations; that very fact proves, that his own heart does not feel the exalted dignity which appertains to every man, because he is, as such, possessed of the inalienable prerogative of being made in the image of God. But lest this equality, which, in one respect, pervades the whole human race, should tempt us to consider the righteous man and the sinner as altogether on a level, and that we are bound to commend the latter as we do the former, the Sacred Writer concludes with the words, "But a man of understanding holdeth his peace;" thereby to teach us, that the man who properly understands and appreciates the dignity of the human species does not, therefore, assimilate, or place on a level, the wise and pious with the foolish and iniquitous; but while he praises the former, he will not insult even the latter, but will pass him by in silence. For the precept of the law, which says, "Thou shalt reprove and exhort thy neighbour," (Leviticus xix. 17,) enjoins us to do it when no one is present, and without asperity; and it absolutely prohibits our bringing any man to public disgrace, in the concluding words of the verse, "Thou shalt not leave him with his sin." He, therefore, who publicly disgraces his neighbour, by expressing the contempt in which he holds him, infringes the Divine command, and proves himself to be "heartless;" for he despises the image of God, in which his neighbour has been created; whereas the foundation of that love which Holy Writ teaches us to entertain for our neighbours is, that we shall despise no one; for contempt wounds the soul: Accordingly, the Psalmist, when describing the state of those who are rejected by the Divine justice, says, "O Lord! when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image." (Psalm lxxiii. 20.) Contempt, therefore, is truly the punishment and affliction of the intellectual or nobler part of man. As the Divine commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself," (Levit. xix. 18,) is general in its terms, and does not define the degree or manner of love we are to

entertain towards our fellow-men, the sage Hillel explains the manner in which we are practically to apply and observe this precept, by saying, "What is unpleasant or disagreeable to thee, thou shalt not do to thy neighbour." Whatever, if offered or done to us by another, would provoke our displeasure, or give us pain, we are not to offer or do to any other person. And as there is nothing so painful to us as contempt, or so vexatious to our nobler nature as to see ourselves despised, we are to avoid despising any other man, or treating him with contempt; for if thou dost so treat him, thou dost not honour all the creations of thy God, and hast, moreover, transgressed that positive commandment which bids thee "love thy neighbour (that is, the whole human species) like thyself."

Do not spurn any thing—Ben Zoma has in general terms directed us to honour the creations of our God: On this lesson Ben Azai dilates and tells us, first, that every man is entitled to our respect and our love; not only because he, like all that is, has received being from the great First Cause; but likewise because he is "made in the image of God," consequently our equal, our neighbour, and entitled to our love. So that in the same degree that we respect ourselves, and are sensible of the high excellency of our nature, we shall likewise respect him. But though man is thus pre-eminently entitled to our attention, the other creations of the universal Lord are likewise to be held in that estimation which is their due, according to the place they hold in the scale of His works. Do not, therefore—our teacher tells us—consider any thing as utterly worthless, nor spurn it because thou either dost not know its use, or considerest it as noxious; but remember, that every thing is called into being and fashioned by the same All-wise and Almighty God who made thee what thou art: That he has not created any thing without an appropriate purpose, though thy limited faculties do not permit thee to discern the object of many parts of creation. Accordingly, the Sacred Writer declares in the name of the Lord, "All is

called by my name and I have created it for mine honour." (Isaiah xliii. 7.) The minutest object in nature forms part of the great whole, which the Lord declares He has created for his own honour, and therefore do not thou presume to spurn it.

For there is no man who hath not his hour—Having told us the reason why we are not to despise any man, namely, because he is not only among those בריות, or "creations of the Lord," which we are bound to honour, but likewise our equal, our neighbour, whom we are commanded to love, as he, like ourselves, is created in the image of God, our teacher next proceeds to meet an objection which we might possibly urge against the rule he has laid down for our observance. We might say, "It is true that as long as man is steadfast in his obedience to the Divine will, and acts up to those precepts which the law inculcates, he preserves the 'image' in which he is created, and is, therefore, worthy of our respect: But when he disobeys the Divine will, and deviates from or renounces the precepts which the law inculcates, he has forfeited his right to the צלם אלהים, or 'image of God,' which he disfigures and degrades, therefore, he is not entitled to our respect, but deserves to be despised, since he has voluntarily renounced the high prerogative of his nature, and has placed himself in a rank inferior to that of the brutes, which are incapable of doing evil or disobeying the laws of the Creator." But in coming to this conclusion, we should be wrong, for man is a free agent, and uncontrolled master of his own will; and though he may for a length of time have pursued a sinful course, and been guilty of the most determined disobedience to the revealed will of the Deity; yet, if such be his inclination, he has the power within himself to desist from his evil practices, to repent of his misdeeds, and to return to the Lord, who in mercy will receive him.

It is an old axiom of our Rabbies, במקום שבעלי תשובה עומדין אין צדיקים גמורין יכולים לעמוד, "The stand which penitents can take, the perfectly righteous are incapable

of taking;" and as the power of repenting and amending is altogether in man's own breast, and the result of his own free will, the "image of God, in which he is created," can never become altogether degraded in him, since "there is no man who hath not his hour," in which he may repent and find forgiveness: Were we therefore to despise any man, however sinful, we lay ourselves open to the danger of scorning him who may hereafter amend, and become acceptable to his Creator, whose image we, in that case, have contemned. Holy Writ cautions us, "If thou seest the ass of thine enemy lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help him." (Exodus xxiii. 5.) But as, on another occasion, we are commanded, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart;" (Leviticus xix. 17;) the enemy whose ass we are not, unaided, to leave sinking under its burden, cannot mean our own personal enemies, since we are to hate no one; but must apply it to those who prove themselves the enemies of God, by setting at nought his commandments, and turning a deaf ear to reproof and exhortation: yet even these, hardened and obdurate as they appear, we are forbidden to despise; nay more, we are commanded to afford them the same willing aid and assistance, which, under similar circumstances, we yield to the most righteous man: For all that our duty requires us to do towards the sinner is, to reprove him, to recall him to a sense of his errors, and, at most, to judge him according to the enactments of the law; but in no case are we to despise or insult him.

As we have already explained the meaning which we attach to the words, צלם אלהים, "image of God,"* we avail ourselves of this opinion, to state our opinion respecting the דמות, "likeness," mentioned in Holy Writ, when it says, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness." (Genesis i. 26.) This word we think is used

* Vide Hebrew Review, Vol. II., p. 177, *et seq.*

to express the free will with which man is gifted, as this is the only point of similitude between the Deity and man; for the Holy One (blessed be HE!) is uncontrolled in His will, which is unlimited, like His power; and to man is given uncontrolled freedom of will, to do every thing that is within the limits of human capacity. Such is not the case with the angels, as they are not free agents, and cannot, therefore, deviate from the path that is assigned to them. And, therefore, on another occasion, when R. Akebah had declared that the great principle of the law was contained in the words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself," our teacher differed from him, and maintained that the words of Genesis, "This is the book of the generations of man," &c., contained the great principle of the law; * for that passage was the only one in the Sacred Scriptures in which it is declared that God did actually create man "in the likeness of God," or gift him with free will; whereas, the other passages of Holy Writ, in which the creation of man is related, only mention that he was made "in the image of God." (Genesis i. 27; ix. 6.) And if we connect what our teacher said on that occasion with his maxims in the present *Mishna*, we find his meaning is, were man only created in the image of God, he would by evil deeds, and transgressing the law, degrade that image, and merit our contempt, as he would in that case possess no means of repentance or amendment. But as he is likewise created in "the likeness of God," gifted with free will, he possesses within himself the means and the power of amending his conduct by abandoning his wicked ways; therefore, the image of God can never be utterly degraded in him, and we must not despise him, as there is no man who hath not the hour of repentance within his own reach.

* *Torath Cohanim*, c. xix.

Neither is there a thing that hath not its place—Every object in creation has been called into being for a particular purpose, has a particular place assigned to it, and is intended for a special service. Nothing is created in vain, for absolute wisdom presided at the calling of the universe into existence: As Holy Writ declares, "The Lord by wisdom has founded the earth, by understanding hath he established the heavens." (Proverbs iii. 19.) It is true that the dim sight of man cannot discern, nor his feeble mind comprehend, the utility of many objects that he beholds in the fulness of creation; but he is not, therefore, to condemn them as useless. Let him remember the reproof of Eliphaz, "O that God would speak and open His lips against thee; and that He would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, for they are twofold in profound reflection:" (Job xi. 5:) His meaning is, "O that the Lord would deign to instruct thee, explain to thee the hidden purposes of creation, and initiate thee into the mysteries of nature; then wouldst thou comprehend those secrets of wisdom which at present are inaccessible to thy limited faculties, and, instead of some objects appearing to thee useless, and without aim, thou wouldst discern that every thing is not only useful, but it is so in more ways than one." And as thus every object in creation fills its appointed place, it is wrong in us to despise or spurn any thing, the value of which may not be directly apparent to us. But let us always remember, that the most humble animal, the simplest weed, or the smallest grain of sand was, like ourselves, and the superior celestial intelligences, called into being at the command of the great First Cause, and they form parts of that whole which He has created for His honour, and according to his wisdom.

(*To be continued.*)

II. COMMENTARIES ON HOLY WRIT.

PSALM XVI.

(Continued from page 320.)

THE observer of mankind cannot fail to notice the sudden changes produced in the minds of mortals in general by external accidents. A series of fortunate events is sufficient to convince the uninstructed, that they are peculiar favourites of something they call "fortune," by which unmerited quality inherent to them, they fancy themselves beyond the reach of adversity. While in this mood, they are inaccessible to care, deaf to remonstrances, and presumptuous in the extreme. Let the scene but shift a little, and their confidence in themselves gives way. As the clouds gather above them, they conspicuously lose their stability, and at the first howling of the tempest they are annihilated. Such a feverish state of the soul is dreadful. The hurried transitions from the pinnacle of joy, to the deepest abyss of grief, absorb all the considerations, which should temper the former and soothe the latter. It is the sacred office of religion to avert the fatal consequences attendant on the mutability of our destinies. A mind imbued with the spirit of religion cannot be too violently affected by either pleasure or woe; the man who walks in the path prescribed by the law of God, advances steadily on his road without dreading the result of his journey. He estimates at their true value the unimportant trifles, which offer so many attractions to the irreligious, and from which the son of man derives but a short-lived advantage. Nor are all the effects of misfortunes strong enough to shake his firmness. They too run towards a goal, where all our sensations of earthly bliss and worldly evils disappear. This perfect equanimity under all mutations of fate, can only be acquired by faith in the words of that Holy Book from which we receive the assurance of an after-state, wherein there is to be no fortuitous distinction between individual and individual; where alone actions are to be weighed and remunerated according to the standard of

absolute justice. Although the great doctrine of the immortality of the human soul is no where in our twenty-four Holy Books laid down in a dogmatical form, it has been proved long ago, that direct allusions are made to an after-state, in numerous passages of almost every chapter, from Genesis to Malachi; and that many sayings of the prophets would be totally unintelligible, unless we interpret them as indicating a future life. The Psalms, especially, have this sublime theme for their peculiar subject. The writer of those inspired poems felt the importance of proving the doctrine which the Hebrews had received from their fathers by inference from natural events. He especially dwells on the uncertainty of any moral system, which does not count this fundamental principle of our religion among its axioms: He shows how absolutely lost we are, if we undermine this solid basis of our moral structure, there being no motive within the reach of human conception strong enough to divert man from the pursuit of mundane attractions, however immoral, except it be the deep-rooted conviction, that the denouement of the drama of life is not of this world! The ode of which we offer a translation accompanied by some comments, is one of the most difficult in the whole collection; partly from the apparent incoherence of the verses; partly from various ellipses, which have given rise to as many different conjectures as there are commentators; whence it has by some of our most erudite Exegetists been pronounced a psalm, containing an almost indissoluble complication of ideas, inexplicable transitions from joyous exclamations to recollections replete with grief. But, thus much is certain, that this beautiful psalm is one of those in which the poet expresses his contentment with his lowly station on earth, and his certain hopes of a future reward. It plainly bears the character of the times when the com-

poser led a life of discomfort, the bitterness of which was heightened by the malevolence of wicked men.

It has been our task, to establish a connexion between the ideas, without

swerving from the generally acknowledged plan of the poem. How far we have succeeded, the indulgent reader will decide.

“A MICHAM (gem) of David.

“PRESERVE ME, O God, for in Thee do I put my trust.”

WE have on a former occasion explained the reason why, according to the opinion of our approved commentators, some of the most instructive among the psalms bear the distinctive name, “Michtam.” In this song, David enters into controversy against the sceptics, by recapitulating all their exclamations against the Deity, and repelling them afterwards with all the energy of his inspired language. He is sensible of the dangers we run, when we direct our attention to the state of men in this life exclusively, if we attempt, from their prosperity or depression, to judge of the state of their morality.

Our reason is too dim to find an issue from this labyrinth, unless we are enlightened by our faith in the justice of the Omnipotent; and hence the sincere prayer of the pious Singer: “Preserve me from the contagion of scepticism, which I dread as the result of the critical position I am about to assume; for as for me, I really have placed all my confidence in thee; but now engage in the combat against the wicked of the earth, for the purpose of calling the whole world to share the glories of my triumph.” After this encouraging exordium, he grants that it may be objected,

“THOU hast said to the Eternal, Thou art my Lord,
My piety avails Thee nought!

(Witness) Those saints, now laid low in the earth,

And those mighty men—my whole delight was in them!”

THESE two verses contain the germs of interminable doubt, and their contents are the upshot of every thing which the sons of Belial may, with an appearance even of respect to the Deity, bring forward as an excuse for their ungodly pursuits. David, assuming their dangerous character for the purpose of investigating the solidity of their arguments, causes his soul, or his worldly appetites, to address the Lord in submissive terms, in order to deduce from the immense distance between the Lord of all and his creation, the utter impossibility that any value could be attached by the Deity to the morality of our actions; since the good or bad tendency of our deeds can in no way affect the Being from whom flows our power of doing good or evil.

This idea, although couched in different terms, is also to be met with in the 3d verse of the 22d chapter of the book of Job: “Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righte-

ous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?” Moreover, if the poet remembers the pious men to whose sufferings on earth he had been a witness, whose struggles against vice had been so great, and whose claims upon reward were therefore founded on the idea of justice attributable to Providence, his heart fails him at the remembrance of their privations during their corporeal existence, and he stands aghast at the thought, that they should now lie shrouded in the cold earth in a state of inertness, while wickedness and ignorance march with up-lifted heads through the land! Those men, whose bright example he had formed the sacred resolution to follow, whose approbation was to him the highest incentive, for he had concentrated all his attention on them—should now lie neglected by God, whose upright worship was their paramount study during an existence teeming with reverses. What can reconcile the

various feelings which flit across his bosom in every direction? How will he satisfy his mind, that—notwithstanding the apparent advantages which fall to the lot of the profligate, who, like insects, feast on the enjoyment of the present moment,—theirs is an unhappy existence, and that virtue is worthy of all the sacrifices we are called upon to bring for it? No reasoning, the standard of which is sought in the senses, can answer these questions; but reason inspires him with the stable belief, that such a palpable deficiency would be derogatory to the perfect system which the Creator has manifested in the world! The very disorder prevalent amongst the fortunes of men, while their souls inhabit their bodies, forces upon him the conviction, that he must look for the accomplishment of human destinies to a region whither we arrive after the short labour of our earthly existence; in short—that the immortality of the soul alone can assign to us a reason why we are to pursue virtue and to eschew vice, as we shall find it expressed in the subsequent verses, which serve as an answer to the objections the Psalmist himself raised against the spirit of his system. Thus, we think, the three first verses of this Psalm

are freed from the charge of incoherence, and claim, on the contrary, all our attention for the poetical beauties with which the writer expresses his feelings. All commentators have noticed, that, in common or prose language, some words would be required to be prefixed to the third verse: We here read it thus “When I think on the saints,” &c. and as to the word אֲדִירִי, “the mighty ones,” standing in regimine without its governing noun being expressed, we refer this diction to the enthusiasm peculiar to our poet, who was at a loss to determine where he should assign a sphere to the might of the pious; since the earth certainly was not the scene of their power. Hence he expresses, his own admiration of them by abruptly adding —“In whom I found my highest delight, and whose might I expected to see shining in full glory.

The dash (—) which the moderns use whenever they wish to leave to the reader the following up of the idea to its conclusion, was unknown to the Hebrews; but we think that a noun in regimine, without an accompanying subject, is still more capable of directing our attention to the suppressed part of the sentence, than a —.

“THEY multiply their sorrows, who espouse another cause.
I desire not their drink-offerings of blood,
Nor to take their names into my lips.”

IN spite of the alluring spectacle they may offer to the eye, I will hold no community with them; for their end leads to destruction; their very pleasures are filled with impurity: When they assemble to

feast and riot, they pour libations to the Deity, which are an abomination in the sight of the godly; and they profane Him whom they pretend to honour.

“LORD, the portion of my inheritance, my cup,
Thou supportest me in the choice of my lot.”

THE Deity, after having pointed out to man a guide on which he may rely, has left him free will to choose the path of life, or the road to death. Still, in consideration of the frailties incidental to our state, we are supported by our heavenly

Father, if we are wise enough to make a judicious selection; and this the Psalmist alludes to, when he declares, that his choice has met with the approbation and support of the Lord.

"My share fell on pleasant places :
I am content with mine inheritance."

THE content of David did not arise from the brilliancy of his lot ; for we have plainly seen, that the acrimony of his reverses has led him to the investigation of his state. His satisfaction, on the contrary, is the offspring of his resignation to the will of his Maker, from whose hands the just can receive no ill treatment. Thus our poet expresses his gratitude to the Lord,

for that equanimity which enables him to view with indifference the glittering pomp of haughty sinners. A peculiar emphasis is placed on the pronoun, עָלַי, "to me," in this verse, by which we are, in still stronger terms, given to understand, that, however wretched my situation may appear to others, to me it is a subject of contentment.

"Now I praise the Lord, who counselled me :
Even nightly darkness preaches to my inmost heart."

THE fourth, fifth, and sixth verses contained the consolation David gathered from his reflections on the ultimate success of the virtuous, and the condign punishment of the wicked. He thus felt himself not in the least injured by the prerogatives to which the wealthy and fortunate lay a claim ; and, having disposed of the objections which pusillanimity may create, against the dictates of faith, he directs his thanks towards the throne of mercy, that the Lord has implanted in our hearts the love of justice and virtue, to eradicate which, it requires all the combinations of a corrupt education : The man who remains in purity will ever carry in his bosom the sense of equity ; for it is the feeling, which the Lord, as an unerring Counsellor, has implanted in the conscience of mortals : Happy are they, who remain faithful to his bidding ! Even during the night of adversity, we may

gather important rules, how to promote our real welfare. Nay, no time is fitter to repel the temptations held out by worldly appetites, than the hour of misfortune. At no time are we so easy of access to sympathy with another's woe, as when we feel the pressure of untoward circumstances on ourselves ; it has even been the conviction of highly-experienced men, that worldly successes are poisonous to the heart, which is easily inflated by a transient ray of prosperity ; whereas, the soul is purified, and the judgment matured, by trials the Eternal imposes on us for our instruction. The Psalmist has elegantly rendered this sentiment by the verse before us ; for the night he alludes to is the overshadowed valley of the unhappy, and the verb representing the English word, "preach," יִסְרוּנִי, invariably contains the idea of censure, remonstrance, punishment, trial.

"I HAVE placed the Lord always before me :
With Him at my right hand I cannot stumble."

As it follows from the benignity of God, that whosoever seeks Him will surely find Him, David concludes therefrom, that whosoever

represents God to himself as ever present, cannot swerve from the line of virtue.

"THUS my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth :
And even my flesh is now at rest."

HEART and glory are the representatives of the mental part of man ;

and, from their operation on the body, depends the tranquillity of the

whole. Hence we are instructed, that the considerations entered into, and detailed by, our poetical teacher, are meant to shed a placid composure over the body, as well as the soul, of man. A well regulated mind knows how to shackle the passions, which else would tyrannize over the flesh. And, indeed, this is the chief result of our foregoing investigation of the psalm.

For without a firm belief in future reward or punishment, no sufficient check can be imposed on the ravages of human passions, since the sensations attendant on the gratification of our animal desires are so intense, that nothing could withhold us from being their slaves, unless, indeed, it be the powerful truth which we have endeavoured to establish.

“FOR thou wilt not yield my soul to the grave ;
Thou wilt not suffer thy pious to see annihilation.”

HERE, then, we have two verses, wherein there is not only an allusion, but a direct assertion, that the immortality of the soul was a truth well known to our forefathers ; for nothing can be plainer, than the words before us, שחית, could not be

translated, “grave,” since grave is an appellative noun, which would require the emphatic ה, whereas, שחית is evidently an abstract, meaning a total decomposition, such as bodies are subject to.

“THOU declarest to me the path of life :
In thy presence there is fulness of joy ;
At thy right hand is bliss for ever.”

SINCE the pleasures of a future life are the aim of the godly, whereas the irreligious cater only for the satisfaction of their momentary wishes, the intrinsic difference between the two desires requires to be pointed out. This difference lies in the duration, as well as in the intensity, of the enjoyments. Earthly bliss is generally of such a nature as never to complete the satisfaction of our desires ; scarcely is one grade ascended, but we aspire at a higher one, and thus we are constantly harassed by fresh desires, which again give rise to others, and thus *ad infinitum*. The pleasures of immortality must be of a different kind, if their acquirement is to be worthy of the highest expectation. Hence the Sacred Writer here calls the possession of them, “the fulness of bliss,” in opposition to the incomplete satisfaction we de-

rive from the low *desiderata* of this earth.

Onward is the direction which the blessed David points at in his inspired poems on the immortality of the human soul ; onward to that region, to which the word of God alone can guide us. May the broken-hearted never peruse those sublime pages without experiencing that alleviation, for which they are intended ! If an unfeeling world turn aside from the humble look of the unhappy mortal, may he find ample consolation in the word of God ! May he be comforted by the sympathetic complaints of Jeremiah ! May he be cheered by the encouraging verse of our great David ! For they too knew grief ; they too were persecuted and derided, and they also found their relief in God, and their hopes in the life to come.

M. H. B.

To the Editor of the Hebrew Review.

SIR,—I have been a regular subscriber to your highly valued publication, and I most heartily desire it may flourish, and produce the good results which have entered into the contemplation of its projectors and supporters. Desirous of contributing to these laudable designs, (in however slight a degree,) I send you, enclosed, a paper,

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being a review of the *Cadish*, and its translations. If you think it worthy of appearing in the Hebrew Review, I beg you will give it insertion.

Sept. 20th, 1835.

I remain, Yours respectfully,
DAVID LYON.

III. REMARKS ON THE "CADISH."

AMONGST the many excellent forms of prayer, comprised in the devotional services of the Jews, there is one, the קדיש, "Cadish," which is pre-eminent in many respects. It is composed in the Chaldee dialect, which clearly proves its antiquity, as we might thereby trace its origin to the period of the Babylonian captivity. It differs likewise from the generality of the prayers, inasmuch as it is arranged, exclusively, for public worship; whilst there are few, which have not been adapted for private, as well as public, devotion. From the circumstance of its being repeated more than once in every public service, we may infer its importance, and the high esteem in which it is held. The matter and style of composition of the Cadish will come more particularly under

our notice, in the course of this paper. I can, however, briefly state at present, that they are both of a superior order.

On comparing the translations of the Cadish, which are given in the different published versions of the Hebrew Prayers, I have observed some not inconsiderable variations, chiefly arising from the words in the original being differently collocated; and as there is not one of these translation with which I can entirely agree, I have been induced to prepare a new translation, in which I have united such parts of them, as concurred with my own views of the real meaning of the passages. I shall now submit it, together with the observations which I have to offer on the prayer itself.

THE CADISH.

1. MAGNIFIED and hallowed be His great name, according to his will, in the world which he hath created! And may He establish His kingdom during your lives and your days, and during the lives of all the house of Israel, speedily and shortly! and say ye, Amen.

Response. Amen. May His great name be blessed for ever and ever!

2. Blessed, praised, glorified, extolled, magnified, honoured, exalted, and lauded be His holy name, (Blessed is He,) above all blessings, hymns, praises and beatitudes, that are uttered in this world! and say ye, Amen.

3. May the prayers and supplications of all Israel, be accepted in the presence of their Father, who is in heaven! and say ye, Amen.

4. May there be fulness of peace from heaven, with life unto us, and all Israel! and say ye, Amen.

MAY HE, who maketh peace in his high heavens, grant peace unto us and all Israel! and say ye, Amen.

THE Cadish consists, strictly, of the four paragraphs which, for the greater convenience of reference, have been numbered above: The one, which follows them, but which I have separated from the rest, I shall have occasion to show, is not an essential part of it. The grandeur of the ideas in the Cadish, their order and clearness, are alike admirable. And when these qualities are considered, in conjunction with the general brevity of the expression, their excellence must be so apparent, that it would be superfluous to dilate upon it. The

second paragraph, however, will require a few remarks, because it is in this principally that the translators have differed widely from one another. Now my chief aim is to show, that the plain simple meaning of the original is sufficiently obvious, although rather indirectly or elliptically expressed; that it is such, as is conveyed in my translation, which is purely literal, if we except the substitution of the more distinctive word "this" instead of "the;" that, in fact, the second paragraph applies to heaven, the preceding one applying to earth. After the adora-

tion paid to God in this world, and the coming of the Messiah have been mentioned, the paragraph in question speaks of the service and homage offered to Him in heaven. It is thus made a part of our worship, to refer to that more excellent and glorious service, rendered to God by the hosts of spiritual beings. If the abundance of terms, at the beginning of this paragraph, should appear strange in an English form, let it be remembered, that they are to declare the acts of beings, whom we are taught to conceive as freed from ordinary and corporeal cares, and unceasingly occupied and delighted with the contemplation and adoration of the Supreme.

To show that the ideas of the worship of God, by the hosts of heaven, and of the likening of our worship to theirs, are not foreign to our established form of prayers, I might adduce two passages in the morning service. One of them is at the conclusion of the section *למאיר לארץ*; the other is the portion designated the *קדושה*, *Kedusha*. The latter is the shorter of the two, and it may be sufficient to be introduced in this place. I find it translated in these words: "We will sanctify thy name in this world, as they (the angels) sanctify it in the heavens above: For thus it is written by the hand of thy Prophet, 'And the angels calling to each other exclaimed:'

"CONGREGATION.—'Holy! holy! holy! is the Lord of hosts! the whole earth is full of his glory.'" (Isaiah vi. 3.)

The existence of this passage might alone be sufficient to confirm the interpretation which I have given of the second paragraph of the *Cadish*. But the confirmation must be made complete, when it can be shown, that both these passages have actually been intended to refer to a similar purpose. This can be done in the following manner: The entire *Cadish*, when compared with *שמונה עשרה ברכות*, or, "the prayer of eighteen blessings," in which the *Kedusha* occurs, may be regarded as its epitome. In following the comparison, we observe that the first and second paragraphs in

the former correspond with the commencement of the latter, as far as the *Kedusha*, and more particularly with the *Kedusha* itself. The third paragraph stands in the place of the several petitions in the latter, and, more especially, of the one in the nature of a *resumé*, which is thus translated: "Hear our voice, O Lord, our God! Have pity and have mercy upon us! O receive our prayers with mercy and favour! for thou art the God who deignest to hearken to prayers and supplications! O, dismiss us not empty from thy presence, O our King! for thou dost in mercy attend to the prayer of thy people Israel. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hearkenest to prayer!" The fourth paragraph is as evidently to the same effect as the concluding blessing in the latter, although much more concise. This blessing commences: "O grant peace, happiness, and blessing, grace, favour, and mercy unto us and unto all thy people Israel!" Nor must we fail to remark, that both the *Cadish* and the *שמונה עשרה* are finally closed by the same paragraph: "May he who maketh peace in his high heavens grant peace unto us and all Israel." It is true, the mention of the Messiah occupies a different relative situation in the one and in the other; but this cannot certainly be deemed an objection of any weight. A correspondence betwixt the *Kedusha* and the second paragraph of the *Cadish*, having thus been proved with greater certainty, it can no longer be doubted but that the interpretation of the latter, which, as I have before said, is the most obvious, is really its true meaning.

I stated that the *Cadish* is composed in Chaldee, but I should have excepted the last paragraph, which is in Hebrew, and which will likewise be perceived to be, in substance, but a repetition of the one preceding it. On both these accounts, it might fairly be taken to be additional or supplementary. But what is still more convincing, that it is not an essential portion of the *Cadish*, is derived from the manner in which the *Cadish* is said. The individual who says the *Cadish*,

after having repeated the whole, except this paragraph, makes three steps backwards, which is intended as a reverential mode of quitting, as it were, the more immediate presence of almighty God, after the utterance of these very solemn prayers. It is in imitation of a custom of the priests at the sacrifices, and corresponds in principle with the mark of homage, shown to kings by those who, having had audience, are about to leave the royal presence. Not till after having retrograded as just mentioned, does the individual repeat the last paragraph, thereby showing it to be distinct from the others.

There may appear a degree of obscurity at the commencement of the *Cadish*, from the use of the expression, "His great name," without any previous and direct mention of the name of God. In answer to this, it must be remarked, that the *Cadish* is invariably repeated, as no doubt originally intended, immediately after some other prayers, in which the name of God will have been conspicuous. Whoever will be at the pains to look in our formularies, at the several occasions when the *Cadish* is said, will observe that such is the case, and that, instead of obscurity, there is a peculiar beauty in this particular point.

Such a review will likewise afford opportunity of remarking the propriety of the respective occasions in which the different modes of the *Cadish* are used, for it is not always repeated in its complete form. Sometimes, the first and second parts only are said, to which is given the title of the "Half-Cadish." Sometimes, the first, second, fourth and fifth parts are said; and this is known by the title of the "Orphan Cadish," the reason of which shall be shortly stated. At other times, all the five parts are said, which constitute the "Full Cadish." This last form is only employed after prayers which have contained some special supplications. The "Orphan Cadish," which omits the part applicable to special supplications, is enjoined to be repeated in congregation, by those persons who have

been deprived by death of a parent or near relative. Thus, on each separate occasion, an individual in that situation is allowed to approach his Maker, and, for the time, pronounce this sublime and concise language of adoration, and be the means of eliciting the responses of the congregation then assembled. The primary intention of this institution has, on the one hand, reference to the merit of the deceased, in having left in this world descendants or relatives instructed in religion, and zealous for the glory of God; and, on the other hand, as regards those who have to repeat the *Cadish* it serves to evince, and, if necessary, to teach them the submission they owe to the Divine will under the loss, however severe, which by his decree they have to deplore. A devout attention to the *Cadish*, also, manifests, on their part, veneration for the memory of the deceased; and although no direct allusion is made in it to the departed soul, yet the more all the circumstances are considered, the more it will, I think, be found to be well adapted for these several purposes, as well as for raising in their minds the solacing thought of hereafter re-meeting their departed friends in a more blissful state.

Before concluding, there is one more topic, which I am desirous of touching upon. Reflecting lately on the frequent repetition of the *Cadish* in the synagogue, and that, in this respect, it resembles what is termed "the Lord's Prayer" in the Christian church, I was led to compare the contents of the two, and I was much surprised to find great similarity betwixt them. It is so great and so evident, that I shall now merely point it out, not deeming it requisite to enter upon any development. But it may be well perhaps to state, that the similarity is more obvious from my translation, than from any hitherto published; although I can safely affirm, that I was not in the least guided by any such view, at the time of composing that translation.

IV. THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF LITERATURE AMONGST THE JEWS IN SPAIN.

(Continued from page 400.)

IN the same epistle, R. David Kimchi allows that these men know how to separate the corn from the chaff; but that, unfortunately, they threw away the former and only preserved the latter to themselves; that these men were evidently in error, even according to the authority of the Talmud itself; and that he and the admirers of the Rambam, had only followed the example of the *Gaonim*, R. Sherira, and R. Hai, his son, and that of the great R. Isaac Al-phet, in their endeavours, not only to maintain the external observances of Judaism, but also to uphold its spirit.

As R. Judah Al-phachar had taxed the excommunicated congregations of Provence with encouraging innovations, and deviations from the law of God, R. David Kimchi, in his second letter, undertakes their defence, and says, "Their houses are hospitably open to every man: They afford sustenance and support to the stranger; and the poor obtains relief without knowing to whom he is indebted for the charitable aid: The synagogues rejoice in their liberality; and the schools dispense their instruction to the children of the indigent, as well as to those of the wealthy. Men, whose way of thinking is thus evinced in their actions, ought not to be accused of heresy, or deviation from the laws of God; and ill-advised must thou have been, when thou didst bring such a charge against them, in which, I am convinced, the wise men of Castile do not join thee."

This letter failed to appease R. Judah, or to incline him to embrace the views of R. David Kimchi; on the contrary, his reply was most harsh and insulting. R. David had commenced his epistle with the words, "Behold, I stand forth as the antagonist (in Hebrew, שטן, *Satan*) of the promoters of disturbance and disunion." R. Judah seizes on the word "*Satan*," and turns it against R. David, saying,

יגער ה' בך השטן
דויר הוא הקטן

"The Lord rebuke thee, Satan,* David, that is, the least," § two quotations from Holy Writ, which, in Hebrew, form a rhymed couplet. He concludes his letter in the same angry and taunting strain, and expresses his firm adherence to the cause of R. Salomon.

R. David Kimchi denied the receipt of this letter, but dispatched another epistle to R. Judah, which serving only to call forth a still more angry reply, R. David saw himself obliged to renounce his attempt of acting as umpire and prevailing on the zealots to recall their excommunication. But as, during the time the above correspondence was going on, the partisans of the *Moreh* were continually gaining ground, and increasing in numbers and influence, R. Salomon, in order to check their progress, implored the aid of the Catholic clergy of Montpellier, and called upon them to put a stop to the spread of an heresy which sapped alike the fundamental truths of both creeds. The clergy of France were glad of an opportunity to mix themselves up in the disputes of the Jews, as they justly considered the state of disunion into which Israel had fallen as the most likely means to promote their attempts at conversion. They, therefore, acceded to the request of R. Salomon, and ordered, that wherever the book *Moreh* was found, it should be burned. ||

This barefaced attempt to force public opinion, and to erect unbelievers into fit judges of religious truths, at length roused the partisans of the *Moreh* from the state of passive forbearance with which, till then, they had endured the assaults of their opponents. Indeed, as long as the zealots took their stand on the lofty ground, of preserving intact the purity of the Jewish faith, the friends of the *Moreh* might deplore the violence of R. Salomon and his adherents, but had no just cause to retort upon them the censure and excommunication

* Zechariah iii. 9. § 1 Samucl i. xvi. 14.

|| Epist. tertia R. David ad R. Judam.

which they had fulminated against the *Moreh* and its adherents. But when these zealots, blinded by fanaticism, grasped the blood-stained hand of a cruel, oppressive, and avaricious clergy; when they invited the bitterest foes of Judaism to take cognizance of its dissensions, and, in so doing, exposed the lives and welfare of their brethren to the ruthless bigotry of tyrants, and the insatiable avarice of juridical plunderers;—when thus they showed that it was not the love of religion, but of supremacy, which animated them; they, at length, roused their antagonists; and the decisive steps, adopted by the great men who supported the cause of reason, of true piety, and of the *Moreh*, once more restored the semblance of peace to Israel, by compelling the leaders of the zealots to sue for mercy.

The physician and Rabbi Bechai, of Saragossa, issued a circular to all the Jews residing within the kingdom of Arragon and its dependencies, in which he calls upon them to espouse the cause of the great *Rambam*, and to resist the disturbers of the public peace; “that he and his בית דין, or “tribunal,” had caused R. Salomon, and his two disciples, R. David and R. Jonah, to be publicly excommunicated, because their ignorance and evil intentions were evident, because they had caused quarrels in Israel, had invoked the interference of strangers, and had sought to lessen the faith of the people in God, and in his servant Moses; (an allusion to the name of Maimonides;) and that he calls upon all the communities of Arragon to follow his example, and pronounce their anathema over the three criminals of Montpellier.” * This circular proved effectual. It came back, subscribed by the chief Rabbies of Huesca, Monçon, Calahtajud, and Lerida, who, together with the principal members of their respective con-

gregations, confirmed the sentence of excommunication, pronounced against R. Salomon and his adherents. The example was likewise followed by several congregations of Provence and Septimania. All agreed that the disturbers of the public peace, the first authors of the outrage offered to the memory of Maimonides, should be excommunicated, and remain cut off from the congregation of Israel, until they recalled the anathema they had pronounced. In all the documents drawn up on this occasion, the *Rambam* is called, “a servant of the Lord,” and his opponents are treated as traitors and foes to the welfare of Israel.

The great R. Moses bar Nachman, chief of the community of Gerona, likewise issued a circular, in which he implores the principal Rabbies of Arragon, Navarre, and Castile, to desist from a dispute which had lasted so long and caused so much evil. He was answered by R. Meir ben R. Theodorus, of Burgos, who attempted to vindicate the conduct of the zealots of Montpellier. This reply called forth a complete refutation, from the great R. Abraham ben R. Chasdai Hallevi, of Barcelona, which, coupled with the force of the excommunication, pronounced against the three Rabbies, of Montpellier, and generally adopted throughout the Jewish congregations of southern France and Arragon, at length reduced R. Salomon to the necessity of recalling the anathema he had pronounced, and of suing for peace. (1232.)

The book *Moreh*, the fame of Maimonides, and the cause of philosophy, were thus triumphant, at least, for a time. Harmony and concord appeared to be restored, and the sage leaders of Israel, freed from the thralldom of controversy, prepared to pursue the path opened to them by the great *Rambam*, to profit by his instructions, and to increase the stores of wisdom and of learning, which he had placed within their reach.

* Proclam. R. Bechai, ad commun. Reg. Arrag. pro Maim., et libro ejus.

THE HEBREW REVIEW TO ITS READERS.

At the close of this second volume, which terminates the first yearly series of our labours, we cannot forbear to address a few words to our readers, not only to retrace what we have done, but also to declare what we intend to do.

We trust we shall not be deemed presumptuous if we appeal to our readers, whether we have not faithfully redeemed the pledge which our prospectus and introduction held out to them. We said, that our publication was essentially Jewish, in all its views and purposes; and the proof of its having realized that character we find in the approbation of our friends and of the public. We promised faithful translations of great rabbinical writers; and it is with some pride that we cite the *SEPHER IKKARIM*, the *YAIIN LEBANON*, the *HILCHOTH DEOTH*, *SCHMONAH PERAKIM*, parts of the *BECHINATH OLAM*, &c. &c. &c., as evidence of our promise having been fulfilled in a manner of which the most fastidious critic has had no cause to complain. We undertook to acquaint our readers with the *Spirit of our Sacred Religion*, with its *Customs and Observances*; and the essays on the Sabbath, on Circumcision, on the Passover, and other Festivals of the year, which are scattered through our two volumes, will, we are convinced, contribute more to acquaint the attentive reader with the true spirit of Judaism than any other work extant, not in the Sacred Language. The *Morality of the Talmud*, its apologues and sage maxims, have been frequently introduced into our pages; and availing ourselves of the lights which the great Rambam placed at our disposal in his Introductions to the *JAD HACHIAZAKAH*, to the treatise *ZERAIM*, &c., we have endeavoured critically to examine that great compilation, the Talmud. *Commentaries on obscure passages of Holy Writ*, particularly on the Psalms, enrich our publication; and of all the subjects on which we promised to treat, there are but three which we have not at all, or but slightly, noticed in the Review. One of these, (the *Cabbala*) we have been obliged to abstain from pursuing; the two others, *Jurisprudence of the Hebrews*, and *Specimens of Talmudic Logic*, may hereafter be introduced. In lieu of these three subjects, we have placed before our readers, an *Historical Review of the Progress of Hebrew Literature in the Middle Ages*, comprising biographical sketches of some of the most eminent of our Rabbies. The kindness of one learned correspondent furnished us with a series of papers on *Hebrew Synonymes*, which will be esteemed as most valuable by the student of that language. The moral zeal of another correspondent enabled us to lay before our readers an able and highly instructive essay on the *Characteristic Traits in the Countenance and Bearing of Nations, founded on moral causes*, which contains a view alike novel and true of the history of the Jews, the purpose for which they were selected by the Deity, and the manner in which that purpose is progressing towards its accomplishment.

All this, and a great deal more, we have been able to effect within the short space of twelve months. But the experience which, during that period, we have acquired of the wants of our people, tells us, that in the next twelve months we shall, under Providence, be able to accomplish still greater things; that, if the influence of the Hebrew Review has hitherto been at all beneficial, it will hereafter become still more so; and that, as its principles are more generally appreciated, as the great lessons, inculcated by the sages of the olden time, become better known, and are applied to the events of the present day, great moral and social improvement must be the inevitable result to the Israelites. Forming, as we do, a close community, distinguished from all others, it is not from without that we are accessible, or can be worked upon. Zeal for the faith and customs of our fathers would justly induce us to resist, as unhallowed innovations, any efforts made by strangers to work on our minds. It is from within, it is from amongst ourselves, that the voice must arise which reminds us that there was a time, not long gone-by, when Jews stood pre-eminent amongst the nations, on account both of their moral, and of their mental, superiority. Kings were guided by their counsels, nations flourished through their wisdom, and the most learned of their Gentile contemporaries were indebted to Jewish Rabbies. But we no longer stand on that proud eminence. The oppression and contumely which for centuries were heaped on our hapless ancestors, which depressed their energies, and enervated their minds, occasioned an apathetic spirit to pervade our nation, which enabled others to outstrip us in the race of improvement. We strove at least to remain

stationary ; but, on awaking from the lethargy of ages, we found, to our dismay, the truth of Hillel's saying, *דלא מוסיף יסף*, "He who does not progress, retrogrades," exemplified in ourselves. Our competitors have, as we said before, outstripped us ; they have, however, not left us so far behind as to deprive us of the hope, that we may, with rapid strides, overtake them in this honourable career, and strive to equal, if not even to surpass, them. For there is that vigour in our institutions, that force in our laws, and that innate energy and elasticity in the Jewish spirit, that the former need but be properly applied, and the latter duly excited, in order to place the Israelite, in every estimable quality of the heart and mind, on a level with the most favoured nations of the earth. But it is from within ourselves that the impulse must proceed : It is the voice of a Jew that must resound in the ears of his brethren ; it is the hand of the Israelite that must apply the stimulus to his dormant people ; it is his example, and his precepts, that must fully arouse them from their apathy. The signs of the times indicate that the period approaches when Israelites will resume that standing in the social world which once was theirs, but of which the cruelty of fanaticism deprived them, and the prejudice of bigotry impeded the restoration. The events which take place around us proclaim, that the day is not far distant when "kings will again be guided by the counsels of Israelites, and nations flourish through their wisdom." In order that we may be fully worthy of the bright era which we anticipate, the exertions of the wisest and best of our nation are required : To them the Hebrew Review offers itself as a willing and zealous auxiliary, as an humble but well-meaning pioneer, to open the path which they may deem it proper to tread. While therefore our pages still continue devoted to the writings of the brilliant lights of Israel, greater attention will be bestowed on passing events. The present condition of our brethren at home and abroad will command our care ; and the means best adapted to improve their moral and social state will be impartially investigated. May the God of our fathers deign to bestow His blessing on our zealous efforts ! May His Spirit guide us in our well-intentioned endeavours ! For, under His Providence, even our humble instrumentality may be productive of great good.

We feel happy in congratulating our nation and ourselves, on the sympathy and approbation with which the Hebrew Review has been received by an enlightened Christian public. But one voice, that of commendation, has hailed it since its first appearance ; the encouragement bestowed by the public press has cheered us in our arduous labours. But a greater meed of satisfaction we derive from our exertions, in finding that the true character of our institutions is at length emerging from under the mass of calumny and opprobrium, with which it had been loaded by interested bigotry ; and that the truly moral and philanthropic spirit which pervades them is beginning to be acknowledged. Happy are we that our labours have been thus far successful ; but, trusting in the blessing of Providence, we presume to anticipate a still more beneficial result. We flatter ourselves that as we silence the whispers of calumny, we may likewise stop the outcry of fanaticism ; and that, by holding up Judaism and its doctrines, such as they really are, we may contribute to remove that unamiable feeling which,—at first engendered by ignorance and pride on the one hand, and fear arising from the memory of wrongs sustained on the other hand,—is still kept alive by antiquated prejudice, although destined to yield to the beneficent influence of humanity and brotherly love.

To promote that great object, is the sacred purpose of our labours : To see it accomplished, will be our best reward.

* * *The publication of the HEBREW REVIEW is suspended during the approaching holidays.—Its re-appearance will be duly announced.*

END OF VOL. II.

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